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5/2006

FAMILY
HISTORY
REINOEHL

C16

STEPPING STONES

The HF Group

Indiana Plant

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5/2/2006





STEPPING STONES

.....in touch with the past

by Gene Reinoehl

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

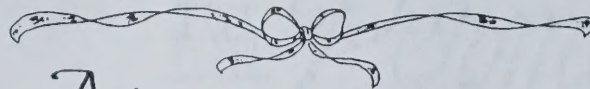
To those who would open and read this collection of random events, I would first express my appreciation to:

Joannie (Motley) Forrest

For her strange interest in a bundle of papers, her skills in translation, dogged determination to sort, to bring to print and finally bind into book form these scattered recollections.

To an occassional inquiry she would give her standard answer - "I only work at it in my spare time." (*I wanted so much for this to be a perfect work, but as I am an imperfect being, I apologize for any errors/jf*) For pay she ask - "Just a THANK YOU!"

--she has it.



As long as we have memories,
yesterday remains.

As long as we have hope,
tomorrow waits.

As long as we have friendship,
today is beautiful.



1934



Gene & Millie
1984

It has been said,
"The hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world."
(how for some men labor under a different illusion)
But History chose to record women of that day
and so it should be

MY TRIBUTE

To the teenaged girl for enduring the pain and hurt that followed her decision to carry to full term, the vital link to this GIFT OF LIFE.

To the mother who had suffered greatly thru early years, who gave so generously, who never ceased to believe but that she took an ailing infant and made a person. A true mother in every sense, caring, praying, working, willing to sacrifice, holding to her hope and expectations, for this was her life and duty, much could be said of her cost and her determination.

To a country girl who on March 4, 1939 became my wife, and without benefits of electricity, water conveniences; using remnants of furniture, wood stove, hand washer, old ice box, - set out to make a house a home. Millie has never rested or detoured from that goal; a ready worker with farm tractor or garden tools, in field or barn; a willing worker. When a baby daughter joined our home, with added responsibilities, Millie set out to feed, cloth, teach and guide her daughter. A great amount of time and talent was devoted to setting standards of conduct in home, church and school, that her goals of motherhood were achieved. That investment was the source of our greatest joy and rewards.

To our daughter, Barbara, who in early school life established her own standards of conduct that made us proud parents. Her thirst for learning developed early and continues to this day and together with hard work and determination, would propell her forward to realize recognition in her chosen field of education. Her marriage to classmate, Vincent Geistwhite, who has earned and deserves our love and respect, formed a team and accepted all community responsibility. The rewards of this union were many and continue to flow to us daily by providing us with four grandchildren, Lori, Brad, Rob and Jim, all of which we are so proud to know and share their seperate futures with great satisfaction; Lori involved in social studies, Brad in engineering, Rob in medicine and Jim, who just began basic college studies.

The multiplication of rewards are now beyond forecasting by the marriage of Lori to Rick Fitts and thus bringing into the world Miss Randi Denise and Brian Vincent, with all the joys and rewards and just plain fun that only great grandchildren can give. We feel so fortunate now in this later period of lofe and for that alone we are most thankful.

History of Birth Family and Events

*The passing of time in years, makes it seem acceptable
to record bits of family history of birth events.*

I was born September 11, 1916 to an unmarried girl whose name was Pearle Dorothy Davinroy, a French girl in a French City, St. Louis, Missouri.

My first name, Jean, came from Jean Schroppell, the husband of Ceclia, Pearle's older sister. Pearle and her mother lived on Russell street, thus Russell, my middle name. Davinroy was the family name, thence Jean Russell Davinroy.

From the several visits to our house by Pearle and our visits to Kansas City where she lived, we learned these facts:

Pearle married a Mr. Keller and had two children; a girl, Marian and a boy named William ("Billy"). Mr. Keller became a compulsive gambler and she obtained a divorce from him and proceeded to raise her children in a high level of moral responsibility. Having been told that her baby had died and being determined to teach her children right from wrong, made it difficult for her to relate events of her school life. Billy went to the service in World War II. The children have fine homes in Kansas City. Pearle escorted us in a drive around town to see their homes and the stores they operate also. We saw pictures of Billy and Marian and their children. There was great resemblance in Billy's picture and myself. I never saw either of them or never needed to. I do realize a degree of curiosity from time to time, but when I would consider pursuing that, I would quickly dismiss it because I have no **reason** to and I feel no void in my life there and the disclosure of events could be very bad. Each visit, Pearle would declare she was going to tell the kids the whole story, but kept putting it off. She couldn't bring herself to do it for several reasons. What would be the effect on the son and daughter who held her in such high regard and what about the grandchildren who spent much time with her? I was also reluctant to contact them for some reason and feared they would suppose I wanted to inherit something as it appeared the mother and children were quite comfortable. I had no need of that. Pearle's sister, Celia, her brother-in-law and nephew were always nice to use and would be glad to have us drop by their house and Pearle would come there. We would go thru Kansas City when we went west a time or two and also drove out just to see them. Once, I flew out to pick up a truck I had shipped out to Kansas City for installation of special equipment. I rented a car and drove around some and visited some. There was yet another reason I did not follow up on meeting the kids. I felt for me to do so could be a hurt to Mom. Now that I was grown up and not as dependent on her, she may think I could forget her. At least it could possibly pose a threat to her. It is a sadness I will always carry; that even the meeting of the birth mother could be a threat to her. The Lord ran this situation, I'm sure. How could a girl deliver a child, an ailing child, at the same time 700 miles away there was this need and the nurse would sign the baby over requiring NO payment and there is much more to that story also that leads me to think it was meant to be.

**"This is the day the Lord
has made. We will rejoice
and be glad."**

I don't know when it happened first, but it came to me one morning while walking that this was the very best part of the day for me. It was a *new* day. What will I learn? What will I see? It will be different and interesting and exciting. I'd meet old friends and perhaps meet a new one this day.

From sometime in childhood I grew to enjoy the early part of the day. Maybe it was from exposure, for it was early to bed and early to rise with the life of the farmer. There were chores and more chores all to be done before breakfast and then be ready for the school bus. When doing custom work for neighbors, I would leave home before daylight and plan to be in the field when I could see to lube and oil the machinery. In fact, Dad made me quit because I felt I wasn't sleeping enough. The paper route required getting up before 4 a.m. to milk the cows by hand, spend 1 hour doing chores, then clean up, go to Waterloo to get the papers and be on the route before 6 a.m. to deliver 115 Sunday papers, drive seventy miles, or a little more, get home and clean up and get to church before 9:30 as I was Superintendent in those days. I did that for six or seven years. School bus driving also required early morning duties beside the barnyard chores. Beginning in 1941, September 4, with a 1935 Ford already 6 years old and being the third owner, I drove it until 1951. It required time and ingenuity to keep on time those winter days; but whatever the task or plans for the day, the early mornings held a certain fascination like a routine miracle.

When I quit farming, I kept busy in various ways; church duties, auto dealership for 29 years, Township Trustee, County Council for

a couple of terms, Handicapped School, Hospital Board etc. These new duties were not all early morning activities and I found myself running for the fun of it-or just walking for a period. Sometimes I would ride the bike for an hour or a little more. I could leave at 5:15 a.m. and ride to Corunna and a little North on road 327 and be back home by 6:30 a.m. but these morning hikes found me thinking and being thankful for how fortunate I was. The result of this was the development of a prayer that satisfied me as it covered the main expressions of gratitude I felt. I would return to the house at sun up, drink a couple glasses of water, wash up and enjoy the prospect of the new day.

When I finally retired, I thought I'd take paper and pencil and record some of my personal activities and experiences as I could recall and perhaps some day the grandchildren or family members might be curious of my place in life.

The first chapter I will write will be the prayer I first compiled and have never changed, almost word by word all these years. I never learned to appreciate the short memorial or 'canned' prayers read at meetings. They just lacked something to me, yet I repeat this same one day after day-year after year. I hope the effort to strive for sincerity and expression are of value.

Millie seldom wakens before 6:45 a.m. or 7 a.m. so I feel I am not stealing time as I time my morning return at 6:30 a.m. giving or taking a few minutes. I am almost *selfish* with this morning time. I discourage anyone who wants to jog along. I have enjoyed this time and save it for myself. I've found it very beneficial for me.

MORNING PRAYER

(5 Miles)

"Good morning God!

I thank you for watching over me and keeping me thru the night and bringing me to another new day, able to work and having work to do. Thank you for forgiveness of sin, the things I say, things I do and thoughts I may entertain, I thank you. Help me this new day to be a better person this coming day.

I thank you for the creation of this great Universe; the sun, moon and stars, all the planets that revolve around in systematic order that make the seasons come and go. I thank you for the creation of this great earth with fertile soil and green grass, flowers, shrubs, and trees, and only you, God, can make a tree. I thank you for the rolling hills and pasture lands, the praries and deserts, the mountains and lush green valleys; I thank you for the streams, the lakes and rivers that flow into the great oceans that hold hands around the world.

I thank you for the miracle of life you created for this great earth; the birds that fly, the fish that swim and the animals that walk this land. Most of all I thank you for the creation of man-in your own image-in the likeness of God, with special gifts you gave to men; to think, to work, to build and teach and learn, to laugh and to remember, and all the abilities; but the greatest of all, a soul for eternal life. For while you made man from the dust of the earth, You breathed the breath of life into his nostrils and he became a living soul; a soul once created would never die but live forever throughout eternity with God. For you made a mansion in heaven, not made with hands, eternal for those who would love God and keep His commandments. But men would not love God, he would turn away and hurt the heart of God. But God would not turn away from man; He would

send His son, Jesus Christ, an infant child born of a virgin, raised in the house of a carpenter and upon becoming a young man, would walk and talk, would preach and teach the greatness of God, the power of God, the love of God, for He would heal the sick, make the blind to see, the cripple to walk, the deaf would be made to hear and all could know and hear and caused to be recorded that man could read and know down through the ages.

Men would not hear, they would not see, they would turn away and conspire to kill and destroy, for they seized Him and scourged Him, spit upon Him, they placed a crown of thorns upon His head and mocked Him saying, "This is a King. This is the king of the Jews!" and the crowd cried, "Crucify Him, destroy Him, do away with Him." They drove nails thru His hands and thru His feet. They nailed Him to a wooden cross and held Him for all to see. And Jesus died on that cross, He died of pain and suffering; He died of sorrow and a broken heart; He died of blood shed, for they thrust a spear into His side and as the blood ran forth to the hungry sand below He said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." And when he was dead, they buried him in a tomb and they rolled a great stone across the door. They secured it with the Roman seal and they posted a guard on either side, for He was dead, buried and to be forgotten, God's son-His only son.

On the third day He arose from the dead, came forth from the tomb; was dead but now alive again. He walked among friends to testify again and again to the power of God, the greatness of God and when his testimony was complete, He assended unto heaven to be seated at the right hand of God until that day, that great day of judgement when the dead in Christ shall rise and all come before Him. I pray that with His great wisdom and knowledge, His mercy and compassion, His

understanding and great love will grant my soul eternal life. Praise God!

I thank you for my life, born in East St. Louis, but in 41 days brought to Indiana, a farm home in Indiana by a church, Not just any farm home, it was the farm home of Mary Benjamin, not just any church, it was the Cedar Lake church, the Church of Christ. There in that little church by the side of the road, from great teachers, Mary Benjamin, Francis Clark, Mayme Allomong, Frank Vian and others, I would learn the Bible stories of Adam and Eve, Abraham and Isaac, the prophecies of Isiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. The love of Jonathan, David, Ruth and Naomi, the wisdom of Solomon, the writting of the apostles Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Paul and Silas and the Revelation of John and I believed Jesus was the Christ, the son of the living God and I asked to be baptised in His name, the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, that one day when the body is no more but returns to the dust from whence it came, my soul will come before God and in all His wondrous love and compassion He will grant my soul eternal life. Praise God.

Now I wish to thank you for my Mother. You always loved me so an infant child, sickly and in ill health and need, you cared for me. When I was hungry, you gave me food; When I was thirsty, you gave me water. When I was cold you kept me warm with your body. You wrapped me in blankets and carried me to church time after time after time because you loved me. You always had time to bind up a wound, dry a tear, fix a slice of bread, play the piano, sing me a song, read me the funnies, tell me a story, play the organ, hold me on your lap. You always had time to listen to me. You gave me all your love, you made me well and strong with love and tender care. You were generous

with your love, giving to friend and stranger alike, yet you received so little-so very little. You gave me pennies when you had none. Your greatest gift to your family was your undying gift of love. I ask God that when I die I may come to you, that where you are I may be and each day I will say, "I love you" each day down through the eternity of time; through ions of time, each day I will say I love the Lord God above all else-the God that gave me the gift of life, hope and destiny. I love Him above all else but of all the persons of this earth who touched my hand, I love you most of all. If it is not my fate to come to you, I ask God this day if He will tell you that I love you this day and each day henceforth. I'll see you in heaven, Mom, it will not be long.

I love you too, Pop. You were good to me. You loved me Pop. When you brought me the new little wagon that I played with so long; when you bought me the guitar; when you would wake me early in the morning while it was dark yet my breakfast was there. I would never know the first day of real want or need. I thank you Pop. I remember when you bought your first car and when you learned to drive you took us all to Michigan to the reunion and Carl Thompson's, Owen Elston's, and to Golden Lake swimming. I remember when you bought the tools to farm with; the disc when they unloaded it in the front yard; the corn planter the neighbors borrowed; the new binder Uncle Charley cut the grain; the tractor and all the tools. I remember on rainy days you worked in the shop half-soeling our shoes, fixing up the harness and I remember all the years we worked together in the barn doing chores; in the woods cutting wood; tending livestock and doing chores, plowing for corn, picking tomatoes, making hay, making maple syrup and going threshing. You let me go to the

World's Fair. I remember when we were hunting the morning you discovered you were blind in one eye, the day Queenie died, when you upset the car, when you bought the "other place", when the game warden came, when the smokehouse burned down, when Dale Benjamin came, when you wrestled Cecil Miller, when you cut your hand and got blood poison. You were good to me, Pop. I'll see you in heaven and we will have a lot to talk about.

I thank you for my parents, my mom and dad and members of our family especially for my brothers and sisters: Evertt and Nina, Hubert and Alice and Minnie and Beth and the Forrest family, for truly, truly, it was in the greatest of time we lived when life was full and rewarding and love was pure, wholesome and everywhere.

Thank you for another family that loved me and took me in and made me one of theirs. I thank you Gertie for cooking, sewing, mending for me at your house. You were always frying fish, turkey, duck or squirrel for a Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter holiday, birthdays, anniversary and get-togethers time after time. You loved me Gertie, I know. As we would sit in the kitchen and talk, just you and I could tell. I thank you. We will do that again only this time you won't need to quit and go to the barn and I won't need to go to the shop. We will just talk. I'll thank you then, Gertie, for taking care of Barbara in our absence, looking after shop folks and always I was welcome in your house. I'll see you in heaven, Gertie. It will be a great day. I'll see you then.

I love you too, Pa. You were good to me. You helped me farm, build a house, run the welding shop and schoolbus. You loaned me your car and truck, Pa. You were always fair. It will be so good to see you, Pa and we will talk how we used to work together in the

woods, the barn, mowing lawns the people we worked for in the welding shop, things we made, things we repaired, mistakes we made. I remember when you were in the nursing home and you would ride along with me to Ft. Wayne to get parts and how we would talk up a storm all the way down and back. We'll do that again, only you won't need to go in the home, and I won't need to go to work. Most of all, Pa, I was always welcome in your home; I remember just a knock on the door and you would say, "Come in". I'll knock on the door soon now, Pa. I'm 71 and I'll hear you say, "Come in." It will be so good to see you again, it will be so good.

I want to thank you, Pa and Gertie, for the inheritance you shared with us. It made possible the new house in Auburn with its comforts and convenience; the new house in Texas with soft breezes, flowers and Mexican people and it made possible the new automobile with its safety and reliability that we can have transport for a time.

I thank you God for Millie my wife, these 50 plus years, that we have lived together, loved together, worked together, played together, laughed together, cried together, planned together, hurt together, sweat together, in debt together, succeeded together, worshiped together, --but always together.

Thank you for our health and I pray that if it by Thy Will that Millie might be restored to joy and pleasure as she once knew. We'll give you the praise and glory for that. Thank you for friends, churches, schools and highways tread and adventures that have been ours and for the many and numerous blessings I can't count, but of all the multitude of blessings thru all the years, the greatest is baby Barbara. We thank you for the happy healthy little child you sent to us to hold, love, teach, direct, nourish and see

grow. Barbara was a loving and obedient child and as she grew to adulthood did not depart from that but remains so even to this day. I thank you for the young man Vince who came to be her husband. A young man with stars in his eyes willing to work hard to manage and together they would build a house and home with love and respect for God and man, church and school, friend, neighbor and community in which they live and they would give generously to that community such that one day it may be said the world is a better place for their having lived.

I thank you for the grandchildren. Lori Ann, with her smile; Brad, with his determination; Rob, with his fairness and Jimmy, with his sincerity. Love them, hold them in Your hand, let it be known to them a career that would benefit God and man will have great reward. I pray for Rick, the young man who became Lori's husband, a good husband and father, an honest, faithful young man, considerate and good. May he feel the need to take his family to church and to give his heart to God. I pray for Lori. May she always be the good mother she is today and give her strength to make the decisions for her health she must make quickly. Now I pray for little Randi Denise. May she always be the blessing she is today and may little Brian, who had a hard time during his young life being able to get and use the proper nourishment he needed to grow and thrive, continue to take nourishment and grow to be the best little young man he can be. We will give you the praise and glory for that.

Now I thank you for the employment I have enjoyed all my life. I thank you for the task of driving the schoolbus all those years. I thank you for Lee Wise, Forrest Miller, Al Smith, Crist Funk, Ralph Hamman and Lloyd Brand; giant men of our community that you gave the courage and foresight to give me the

courage that I could do that work. I thank you for the faith of those parents you gave the faith and trust that I could transport their children to and from school, day after day, year in and year out with safety and proper respect. I thank you for the love and loyalty of those students; those many children that rode no other bus, but rode the entire 12 years in my bus, learned to love me and I them that made for the atmosphere of joy and well being. I would look into their eyes each morning for that love and it was there and it sustained me thru the most difficult time of my life. I know not how you arranged to ride that bus, God, but I felt your presence there in the subtle manners you said, " Watch that hill, watch that light, watch that curb, watch that truck, watch that car, watch that kid, watch that bike"--every day, every night, winter and summer, year after year and none would be injured and I could walk the streets of our town and fear no one to say, "You hurt my child"--Praise the Lord! I thank you God for setting aside time to ride that bus morning, noon or nite, winter or summer you were there. I thank you again and again for keeping this presence on our bus. I thank you God for putting the bus back on the road the nite when I lost control. I know not why that bus should leave the road as it did--was it carelessness, inattention, weather conditions, road conditions, fatigue? I know not why, but as the bus left the road, it plunged into the ditch and headed for the bridge high above the creek with enough speed and force to carry that guard rail from its base to the bottom of the creek with a crashing, crushing, stunning impact; the twisting steel, the breaking glass, the high water that ran, the seat belts secured. There would have been no rescue effective and my life would have ended in a tragedy. A tragedy for my home, my family, church and

school, friends and neighbors and a needless, needless tragedy for myself, but I thank you for you said, "The time is not" and held up your hand and put the bus back on the road without sight or sound, mark or indent and no one would know for miles and years later when I would tell that story how God loves a sinner. God loves sinners and He gave this one a second chance; a second chance to complete obligations to the school and community, a second chance to fulfill our plans to spend a retirement time in South Texas with soft breezes, flowers and beautiful people; a second chance that I might tell you-tell others that God loves a sinner--God loves sinners.

I want to thank you, God, for other employment; for Guy Lepley and the Lepley garage. I love you Guy. You were good to me and my family. I enjoyed working for you and look forward to seeing you in heaven. We will have so much to talk about; the new cars, opening day, the trips we took and the fun we had. It will be a great day when I see you again.

I thank you God for all the people that I met, those that meant so much to me; Earl Forrest, Myrtle Forrest, Glenn Forrest, Marge Forrest, Ira Casselman, Orval Casselman, Bill King, Myrtle King, Ray Skelly, Marion Clark, Francis Clark, Kenney Weirich, Ralph Weirich, Jim Emmerson, George Butler, Ed and Bill Chrysler, Felex DeWeldon, John Rerhr, Vance Greek, Smokey Boyle, C. J. Maxton, Glenn Rieke, Guy Lepley and many, many more whose names I can't recall quickly who I touched shoulders with, who opened doors and opportunities before unknown. I thank you God for each one named and unnamed that enriched my life with great memories.

I thank you God for little opportunities you sent my way. To be Sunday School

Superintendent, song leader, teacher, class president, P.T.A., Alumni Reunion, welding shop, campers club, Dixieland Manor Driving Instructor. I thank you for each little responsibility as it brought me in contact with good people who broadened my life with experiences otherwise unknown.

I thank you for the opportunity to serve on the Garrett Wee Haven School Board for handicapped children, for it was there I saw those born with restrictions and limitations on their life; it was there I saw first hand their frustrations and hurts, their failures and disappointments; but I saw something else, their achievements, their successes. I saw sacrifices daily and tremendous efforts and determination to gain an education and as I watched, I learned to appreciate them as never before and to more fully appreciate the strong healthy body that was purely a gift to me and resolved to give more care and conduct to this and be more conscious of what I eat and what I drank that I might in some small minute way avoid unnecessary ills that surround us and I give you the praise and glory for that.

I thank you for the opportunity to serve on the DeKalb Hospital board, for it was there I saw a building grow up before me that would house all the facilities to give aid and comfort to those with illness, those with pain and uncertainty, those who suffer accident and injury and those who seek rest and peace, those who are old and pushed aside to be forgotten, all who may be gathered in and restored to accept the full number of days awarded to them. I thank you for this hospital and all these many years it has served this community and I pray that it may serve many more as the need be there.

I thank you for the opportunity to serve as Township Trustee for those terms, for it was there I learned to be a servant to all in

our community to young and old alike, rich and poor, strong or weak and especially to serve those in a time of crisis in their life, those sick or invalid, those who need food, shelter and medical attention, those less fortunate than myself and trust I served with a degree of understanding and love, not of harsh judgment, but rather compassion and to account the taxes fair and equitable that all would share in their proper portion in this responsibility.

I thank you, God, for the chance to serve on the County Council for a time, for it was there I learned of the problems and matters of civil government. Here I learned to think and meditate upon these actions and seek solutions that had long range benefit for our community I thank you for that. I thank you for the special gifts ; that of enjoying people and being with people for it has been rewarding to me.

I thank you, God, for later and more current employment that has been so fulfilling and beneficial to us. I thank you for Ben Davis who has given me work from time to time and paid me so promptly. Thank you for Jim Helmkamp who also provided me work. I thank you for Carl and Lloyd who gave me the opportunity to work all last winter season in such interesting and useful fashion. Especially I thank you for Mr. Rex Hile and his travel agency that provided me with some of the most interesting and rewarding work I've ever had. If it be thy will, I pray that these men may be successfull in their endeavors and that Mr. Hile realize your hand of guidance through their times of stress and that his health may be maintained as he devotes his life's energy to showing people your handiwork.

Now, God, I take this opportunity to thank you for the private and special gifts of which are mine to enjoy. I thank you for the gift of

personality, for the pleasure to be among people; to love people and to be with people, for desire to meet strangers and friends. As I now reflect upon my life past, I find that people were my hobby, my recreation and my life. I enjoyed people of all walks of life and believe it was a source of my greatest pleasure and reward. I thank you in the only way I know how for this gift to be mine of great import. I ask at this time and pray that I may continue with this gift--even unto the final day--that I not become hard and hurt and strike back as many do. I'll give you all the praise and glory for this personal gift given to me.

Now I thank you for my eyesight which has served me these 70 plus years so well, for I have seen the sun rise and the sun set. I've seen the blue sky and the stars. I've seen strong men worship God, choirs in the chapel, children at play, a bird on the wing, waves on the ocean, mountains, green valleys, prairies and deserts, woodlands, lakes and streams and I've seen smiles on the face of my friends. Thank you for my eyesight.

I thank you God for my ears, for I've heard the rolling thunder, the rush of wind and rain. I've heard the Word of God from the pulpit, the trumpet and violin, the choirs of the chapel. I've heard a mother pray. I've heard the laughter of children, the song of the bird, the bark of the dog, the roar of the waterfall, the pulse of the waves, the rustle of leaves, the murmur of the brook, the greetings of my friends. I thank you for my ears.

I thank you for the sense of smell, for while I know the odors of harm and danger; yet I know the fragrance of the rose, the blossoms on the tree, the meadow in full bloom. The fragrance of the blossom, the flowers of the field, new mown hay, the

preparation of a meal, newly turned soil of spring, fresh air after a summer shower. I thank you for the sense of smell that has served me so well these many years.

I thank you for the sense of taste, the quick response to harm or threat of the caustic or bitter, the nutrition of the vegetable, the crispness of the fruit, the nectar of the honey bee, the savoring of a home cooked meal, the sweetness of the delicacy. I thank you for the multitude of satisfactions from the mysteries and pleasure of taste.

I thank you for the sense of touch, the warning of extreme hot or cold, the softness of a baby's cheek, the coat of the rabbit. I have felt the petal of the rose, the harshness of the stone, the mystery of a limb of the tree, the warmth of a loved one, the handshake of my friends. I thank you for the sense of touch.

Dear God, I thank you again for the new day and all the joys and pleasures it brings. I thank you for these gifts given directly to me from your hand, these gifts that have served me so well these 70 and plus years, that have truly lead me thru the abundant life. This morning as I begin this new day, I know not what will come, but I realize that of all people, I must be most wealthy. I appreciate the new day that you have made. I will rejoice in it."

(I would try to conclude with the Lord's Prayer before returning home at 6:30 a.m. as Millie usually awakens around 7:00 a.m.)

The Question

Can we ever return home? After 50 years? After 10 years? Can you return to yesterday? 24 hours past. -- No. -- As the song says, "Yesterday's gone, Sweet Jesus, and tomorrow may never be mine"-- you can't go back to yesterday. It has joined the

past and never to be lived again the everyday routines, some so simple ever so plain, then are recalled and now become precious. To wake up and hear Dad "building fire" in the room stove, Mom replacing stove lids in the kitchen, we kids helter skelter getting ready for the bus, Mom trying to get us all fed, trying to comb her long hair, Grandma darning socks, cleaning lamp chimneys. Can one return home? One can stand on the spot again. That is of small value. It is a disappointment. It is not to be. Each day of each year is different from the one before. The message is there, it is simply this; live each day to the fullest, have no regrets--a sad thing. Why do those facts fail to come thru earlier in life? When brothers and sisters all together with Mom and Dad eating supper, going to the lake, Christmas morn, singing hymns at church, working the garden, Mom brings a cold drink, Dad popping corn. Can we return?

One of the great gifts God has provided for us is storage of years of memories. Quiet time by one's self and the opportunity to do the picture of instant replay; Mom at the ironing board, Pop digging fish bait, reunions again, playing in the barn. Because of change, God chose the memory to fulfill our needs.

If these crude notes do remain for a short period of time and but one person choses to read them and try to gather some faint idea of life in the '20's and '30's and later, they will not receive a minute portion of appreciation. I have enjoyed recalling some and writing a few. For upon quiet meditation, one can recall in hours more than can be written on 100 pages.

This writing reminds me of a man standing on the shore of a big lake with camera poised, but he turns this way and that; he can't capture the fullness he feels and as result,

settles for a snapshot of a small area while it is a failure to be viewed by friends. Each time he reviews this he sees so much more; the fish they caught, the sail boats they rode in, the kids saying, "Can we stay just one more day?" The wife saying that this has been the nicest place we ever camped; so it goes.

RETURN HOME

I wonder if all people at times want to return home. As I was growing up, it seemed I was so busy with what I was doing and what I was *going* to do that many nice things passed by quickly but now I find them popping up from nowhere.

I have seen pictures of people return to their old home to walk around the old house. For its value, I like to walk thru the incidents themselves and the folks that were involved; this is that "walk thru".

The day when Clarence King and Irene, his daughter, each purchased new 1929 Chevrolets.

When Earl Forrest purchased two new 1929 Fords; a 4 cyl. 1 1/2 ton stake bed truck and a 1929 Ford convertible, an "unheard" almost. The truck served the family for years both as car and truck. The car, the convertible, suffered two major accidents and died prematurely. The Forrest boys and their sister, Irene, picked me up to attend a band concert one Saturday nite at Ashley. The boys went on to Lake James and didn't return; I drove the truck back to the Forrest place that nite-no drivers license, of course- with Irene sitting on the edge of her seat all the way. We made it!!! I was 13 or 14 and she was younger.

When I was a small boy, men, many local neighbors together with team and wagon set out to regravell the Auburn-Ashley road. The great array of teams and men like a human chain, load after load, hauled gravel from the pits to the roadway. I sat on the front step watching big teams and strong men with shovels and no gloves move all that gravel day after day.

It was around 1936 or 1937 that the Auburn-Ashley road was blacktopped. I

recall the work and was not so impressed with that operation. I did get paid over a week end to guard the church corner at nite so no one drove over it.

How I would drop my knife and fork and mashed potatoes and noodles when an airplane was heard. That was the ultimate in new and progress. I would watch until it was out of sight; how could it stay up there? "Lucky" Lindy they called him; a courageous young man with a vastly over loaded plane, alone out over a wide, wide ocean flew a 33 1/2 hour journey. Today, it takes the Concord, only 3 1/2 hours. The little Ryan against great odds, a strong heart also.

Neighbors were close in the childhood days. When word went out that Ray Skelly was going to "buzz" wood, or Marion Clark would "shred" corn, neighbors would come from all directions; some earlier, some later, when chores were done; they came to help. No one kept track of hours worked in those days.

One morning Dad said, "Take the tractor and plow and go over and help Ray Skelly a day or so. I think you can get back thru the woods into Miller's woods and across into Skelly's field somewhere back there".

The tractor had spade lugs on the rear wheels, the front wheels had rubber tires on our later model, but Dad wouldn't have tires on the rear drive wheels. We made steel rims we bolted over the lugs to travel the road way when the road was improved; this was a time consuming job, on and off.

When Dad told me I could use the tractor and plow to do custom work to make extra money, I went wild. From daylight to after dark, I over- did it and he made me quit and put the tractor away. While it lasted, I sure plowed a lot of fields all over the neighborhood.

One early morning up near Ashley, I was driving the tractor towing the plow running thru weeds beside the road, I dropped the whole outfit in a deep culvert inlet. It was a close call! The front end went down before I could stop, up the other side and there I was- front end up the bank, plow followed the drawbar down. I wasn't hurt so I went to work carrying stones where I could find 'em; got some limbs from near by trees, anything I could find, piled under the wheels and with some chains I carried, got the darn thing out

in perhaps 1 or 1 1/2 hours. Then went on to work!

Summer months, Uncle Charley lived in Ashley. He would drive down to our house to get eggs and such of Mom, buy whatever ground cherries I had picked (5 cents per quart). I liked Charley and a chance to look at his new 1929 Ford Model "A". At his death, Carl Swank purchased it for his son Bob to drive; he did.

One of the first chances I had to work "out" was for George Dilley. He purchased a "hammer mill" grinder from Sears Roebuck on one occasion to be able to grind his own feed. When he had it all set up, feed mixed on the barn floor ready to scoop in and tractor belted up, he came after me but didn't tell me what he had 'till we drove in. We were anxious to try it, just worked beautiful for 3 or 4 sacks of cow feed when he had mixed an angle iron in the feed; tore up the new mill screens and gave us the scare of our life. One time he had over 200 bushels of potatoes secure in the feed hallway in the barn where the livestock gave off heat to prevent freezing. He had a radio in his house and learned of well below zero forecast; he panicked and got me to help move the potatoes into the house basement. There was so much ice we couldn't get them out. The car with chains on couldn't pull the first trailer loaded up the bank so we had to jerk off all the blankets and carry them back into the barn. I never slept that nite. We kept hot water beside the potatoes and changed the water every 30 minutes all nite. George would fall asleep on the couch. I remained awake while listening to the radio as it was a novelty to me. I heard the same song all night "Music goes round and round and it comes out here"!

George Dilley was young and hard working. He brought new ideas to farming that some older couldn't accept quickly. I liked to work for him as I learned the "more up-to-date" approaches that were on the way. George had many close calls from hurry, hurry, but survived them all. One time he was driving his Fordson tractor approaching a gate. He depressed the clutch, it had a clip lever pushed against it to hold for disengage, got down on his knee to unwire the gate at the bottom just in front of the tractor. All at once the engine labored a bit, he jumped up on the gate, came down with

one foot on the gate slat and the other on top of the tractor front wheel. The front wheel skid-rim stuck into the wood cedar post and the clutch slipped into gear.

He farmed for Ruben Rowe across from Earl Forrest. I was driving the old Fordson and George was driving his newly acquired Farmall. He got stuck and had the rear wheels down to where the drawbar was in the mud. When I saw him stuck, I went over to help. He had been working at it before I knew of it and carried rails from the nearby fence to put under the lugs. One thing he did was to chain one of the big heavy rails to the right rear wheel. As I approached, he let the clutch in ever so slowly and was raising the tractor up as the chained rail sunk into firm support; but all at once it topped left area and before you could bat an eye, the wheel brought that rail over head. George ducked down in time for it to clear him, but came down across the hood and control levers in front of him so violently that it bent all outward the sheet metal and the valve cover of the engine. It laid up the tractor and could have easily caused serious injury or death had it caught George. Before he had the Farmall, he cut his grain with the Fordson tractor by means of ropes on the steering wheel and clutch lever as he sat on the binder operating the binder levers and tractor controls also!

I always have enjoyed seeing, driving and being around nice cars. Frank Albright got a new blue/black Chevy 2 door 1929. Ebon bought that, he kept it well-clean and good looking with green lights on the mud flaps and a cluster of green lights under the hood that let streaks of green come out on the front fenders at nite and squirrel tails on the radiator cap like all the rest.

Earl Skelly too got a new 1930 or 1931 Model A black with yellow wire wheels. Leroy Skelly got a Caboriet Model A coupe with convertible look. The barber at Ashley got a new 1931 Chevrolet 4 door with everything on it. In front of the radiator was a chrome screen; the first grille I ever saw. Wheels in front fender luggage rack, outside mirror.

I would walk to Ashley for play practice or whatever and often get a ride with someone too. One nite I was walking home out by Hartmans corners when the biggest

car I ever saw stopped and picked me up. It was Pete Clink and girlfriend. He took me home. The dash was all lit up, the hood a mile long and had a lite in the radiator cap so you could see the water temperature. No end of what will they think of next! Butch Keesler, retired DeKalb Sheriff, would let his wife drive his big convertible to Ashley to teach. She would pick me up at our house and that car had a hood like you wouldn't believe! New things were on the way to rural folks.

EARLY HOME

It has well been said the longest trip begins with one step and so it is.

The first step has been delayed so very long--this trip is the recording of some events of my life that may be of interest one day to those who live in a much different world. The stories and incidents as I will write, will be as I remember them and may contain some inaccuracies.

At age 72 now, reflecting upon my life experiences, it occurs to me to seek out items of fun and importance that shaped my life. My earliest recollections were of my mother telling me I was adopted from an orphans hospital in East St. Louis forty-one days after my birthdate of September 11, 1916.

While the act of being born, no doubt is of great import, my lack of memory will allow me to pass over quickly short duration and sketchy details. Perhaps the greater and far reaching, coming first to mind is my home life, a rich and rewarding experience.

A rural farm setting, a wonderful loving, understanding mother, dedicated to church and home with the goal to raise this child in depression times, thus began.

Mary Benjamin, born May 10, 1892, lived on a farm in DeKalb county, northeast Indiana. This farm was the "home place" that had reared six brothers and sisters, all older except one brother. There was Orley, married and a conductor on the Northern Pacific railroad; Russell, married and chose a military career; Irma, married Carey Treesh a railroader living in Stroh, Indiana; Jenny, married a farmer living near Corunna, Indiana; Austin, a younger brother, married, attended Bible seminary and established a high level of preaching and teaching the Bible

to Churches of Christ. (His family was destined to carry forth his work. His son, Paul Benjamin has so distinguished himself heading Church Growth in Washington, D.C.) Mary remained unmarried and lived at home with her aging mother, Ida Alice Benjamin. Mary and her mother lived in a very modest fashion deriving income from renting portions of the 80 acre farm. They did supplement income with some livestock but limited mostly to raising chickens and selling eggs.

The center of their activities was the church. The Cedar Lake Church was formed earlier, with group meetings held in local schools or residences. During this time a church house was built on the corner of their farm, which currently is County Road 27 and County Road 14. This location was the result of the donation of land less than 1,000 feet from the homestead residence, a convenience indeed.

When Mary's father, Marion Benjamin, died earlier, all farm items were disposed of with the exception of a driving horse and a buggy. There was no need for this to attend church Sunday morning and evening, mid week service and special evangelistic meetings. They could walk to church in a few minutes.

Mary was not as fortunate in finding a mate as her older sisters. From time to time she went to various church functions with a local boy. While she admired him greatly, their friendship remained just that--friendship. During a visiting 2 week period in North Liberty with her brother's family, she met a young man who took considerable interest in her. He was a business man and held great promise for her. After returning home by train they continued to exchange letters. As interest grew, the young man purchased a train ticket and came to see her and remained with her and her mother for a short visit. When the local boy in the neighborhood learned of this fact, he came to her to say he was giving up the girl he now courted and wanted her again after all. She wrote the newly found suitor, ending it all only to be dropped in a short time by the friend nearby. There were many disappointments in her life. This was only the beginning. Later she married a young man she had known, of some distance away, named Roy Stomm. For a short time it

seemed life was on a direct route, but great sorrow and heart break came quickly when the first baby born died suddenly. The young family was back to just two with a baby taken away from the little home. It was soon learned that Roy was developing a brain tumor and lived but a short time. This double barreled impact of heartbreak left the yet young widow in a serious state of health. Neighbors shared the concern of family and relatives as to the near future and actual survival. As a result of the family meetings and grave concerns expressed, a doctor was consulted. It was he who made the suggestion of perhaps replacing the lost child by adoption. Ida Alice, Mary's mother, embraced this idea as well as brothers and sisters. Their little church group had sent support to an orphanage in St. Louis, Missouri and it was decided to go there immediately. The older daughter was selected to make this trip. Irma's husband began as a brakeman on the Wabash railroad and this gave her free passage on the rail line. Her three children, Harold, the older, Raymond, then Gladys were old enough to spare their mother a few days. After hasty preparation, Irma departed on this important mission with no one to accompany her. The long rail trip was one of hope and expectation for success. By the time she arrived, it was early in the day of or near October 21, 1916. She arrived at the hospital orphanage and detailed her mission. There were discussions of needs and laws and responsibilities. There ideas and suggestions that carried into the noon hour. It was shortly after when Irma was informed of the decision. She would be qualified to adopt a child and those arrangements could begin soon, but before they could begin, a fee of \$300 must be paid. All this planning to fulfill an immediate need, the anticipation and joy of the return were all dashed by the declaration for money. There was no way the older mother along with the young families together could raise \$300. The rent of the farm could scarcely supply taxes and a meager living. There was yet the burdens of medical and funeral costs that lingered, as these balances demanded continued reduction. With a heavy heart, Irma proceeded to leave the orphanage. She had become so sure this would work and she could be instrumental in benefitting her

sister; to have a part in supplying her with a child and thus see her embrace the more normal life for a young mother. She had found it difficult to relate family joys of her home life and looked forward to seeing her sister share in the rewards of motherhood. As she departed and closed the door behind, her heart was heavy and sad beyond description. It seemed an unbelievable cruel turn of fate, for she feared the return trip now that she had looked forward to before.

It was some time later in the afternoon a lady entered the orphanage to report a woman was setting on the entrance steps crying. There was concern for her as it was very damp and cold. A nurse was chosen to investigate immediately and escorted the woman inside where she was questioned. As the nurses asked what they might do to help her, Irma explained her plight and that of her sister in Indiana. Those on duty were quick to dry her tears and took her to their office to learn the facts and do what they could. She was taken to the office of management. A lady was in charge that day. She was again questioned and told her story again beginning with the deaths of a husband and child and of the desperate need. She told of her joy and expectation of receiving a child; now all hope was gone and she could not bring herself to return home and face the family members. The head nurse was present now and listened intently, sharing in the concern and secretly searching for a means to help. It was she who reported they had a baby there, a boy nearly six weeks old, who was in ill health suffering from tuberculosis and needing tender love and individual care they could not give. She informed the manager the baby was declining and she feared for its recovery. A hasty meeting was held and a decision was reached. The hospital informed Irma they would give her this 41 day old baby, some food and baby necessities to travel. There would be no charge, but she would be required to sign papers stating that she would assume all doctor, medical and all related costs to caring for this child including funeral cost if that should occur whatever the expenses were forth coming from that day, October 21, 1916. Irma agreed quickly. The child was prepared while papers were put in order and before nitefall, Irma Treesh

of Stroh, Indiana, left St. Louis, Missouri with a 6 week old baby boy!

Needless to say, Irma had come to the big city of no friends or acquaintances, with great light hearted expectations, only to learn a cold heartless wind of despair; had withered her soul and left her hollow and hurt. Now she was lifted again to ever greater heights as she clutched a live homeless baby boy peering thru the blankets; "Truly a gift of God" she said over and over again.

Irma secured travel for the return trip as soon as possible. She would tell later that she was so engulfed in the events that her only thoughts were to care for the baby; to look at it constantly and assure herself it was fine, that she never ate or drank til she got home. It never once occurred to her that she hadn't eaten!

I have often heard folks discuss the first things in their life they remember. The first I can recall was 2 1/2 to 3 years of age and I was helping Mom and Grandma chase a horse into the barn. The horse was in the barnyard but refused to enter the door. I was to stand to one side and help as they chase Old Barney over there. They were yelling so I did too and one time Old Barney ran inside. Mom called, "He's in--he's out", for so he was, but the ladies were persistent and finally got him shut in. When they got him harnessed to the buggy, they put me in first setting me on the floor at their feet right behind the high dashboard. Mom and Grandma shared the seat. Mom was driving and the stinking leather lines passed by my face as Mom guided the horse. I would grow to hate these lines, they always smelled of horse sweat and salt and they rubbed my face under my nose too. Mom drove north to one mile south of Ashley where we turned west. After about 1,000 feet, we left the angling road there and took to a wagon trail through the woods. It was here I would record my first real fright. Somehow as Mom was driving, she ran over a large stump. The front wheel came way up tilting the buggy at a precarious angle and almost throwing me out. Grandma yelled and we stopped suddenly. There we were, the front wheel came down, buggy step rested on the stump, the back wheel ready to climb up as the horse would go forward. We all climbed out. Grandma led me a safe

distance away as Mom led the horse forward ever so slowly. The buggy tipped greatly and yet returned to level position and we reboarded and continued our trip. This was a traumatic experience for me and about the first thing in my life I can recall. I would learn just a bit later that we were on our way to John Reinoehl's to see Charley Reinoehl. Charley was a brother to John and had been visiting Mom for some time. They were considering getting married at that time.

I do not recall our day to day living prior to Mom marrying Charley Reinoehl. He came then to live with us and was always there. He was a hard worker, quite street-wise from some years of age difference having been a sub mail carrier and worked on the railroad for eleven years. He had been married a short time to Silvia Bickle but was divorced. The Reinoehls were a trait of German and on occasion he said his relation would speak in a German dialect they called "Pennsylvania Dutch". It was a convenient thing to do when we kids were near and they chose to talk over our heads.

From my earliest recollection, I learned to call my parents Mom and Pop with only one other deviation when I called him Dad. Many children with birth parents had far, far less than did I because I had their every consideration in growing up living at home until I was 23 years of age.

I recall my dad buying machinery to farm with. One by one he purchased a plow, tillage tools and harvesting equipment. I would run out to see them unload whatever and after they left, Mom and Dad would look over the purchase and consider the job it would do.

The new disc was unloaded from the ditch in our front yard where it remained for some time. I would sit on the seat and pretend I was driving the big team. It was small by today's standards and was only a single gang disc. Dad would load corn and oats into a wagon box "to go to mill" at Ashley where they would grind the grain and sack it. He would haul it back home to feed the livestock, mostly hogs. One time in a warm weather period, I saw Pop returning perhaps 1/4 mile away. I walked down across our garden to the north driveway to wait for him there. As he approached, I saw a handle of a child's wagon sticking above the wagon box. I ran up

and asked him what that was in there. He acted surprised and was inclined to pass it off, but I persisted. He stopped the team, went back on the load of ground feed and lifted out a beautiful well built wagon for me. It was varnished wood shining with red wheels, side boards and all. I played with it seems like for miles and for years. I went around the house until on the west and north side I wore ruts so deep it would follow without steering. It was a very useful item also for hauling chicken feed, garden items, wood--no end.

It was the normal way that Mom would always go to the barn and help Dad do chores. About the only exception to that practice was for a short duration when Mom would have a new baby. There were seven children born as years came and went. Beginning with my sister Beth, including Minnie, Alice, Hubert, Nina and Evertt all living and doing well.

One baby died early in life, a boy named Alva. In those days the body in a casket was returned to our house and lay-in-state in the bay window of the parlor. Neighbors would come and go, mostly in daytime because we had only kerosene lamps and very few cars for transportation. Mom grieved greatly over this death as she felt she contributed to this when the baby suffered a fall while she was caring for him.

Soon after, Beth came along. Grandma would care for her and Mom would take me along to the barn to do chores. She and I would milk the cows morning and nite while Dad tended the hogs, fed the cattle and horses and also cleaned the stables. We kept about 10 cows and proportional number of calves and young cattle. It became my job to teach the calves to drink from a pail. We would let them suck the mother until "her milk was good." Seems the first milk was special for her young only, then we would remove the calf, hide it in a box stall and proceed to teach it to drink from a pail. Now this was the trick we never got mastered without problems. The standard practice was to let the hungry little guy begin by letting it suck my fingers then when he became real busy I'd slowly push the head down into a pail of whole milk. (Later, we gave the calf skim milk as to conserve the cream for sale) Hopefully, the calf continued to suck your finger and learn to drink. When you leaned

over as you dropped your hand into the milk, they would suddenly let loose, jerk their head up and bump you everytime before you could dodge 'em. All kinds of stories went around about that procedure. It proved to be a training experience; training the instructor to control his temper and patience; it was not for everyone. Some folks let the calf skip a meal or two; some used a pail with a nipple over a hole in the side of the bucket. It was a mess any way you tried and in time, one would become disgusted and quit 'til the next time. Mom would tell how Uncle Austin became so disgusted he gave up, dumped the milk on the calf and she heard him say, "Maybe it will soak in!"

We did all of the milking by hand and would empty our pail after each cow was milked by pouring warm milk into a can topped with a large strainer. Of course the milk collected dirt and other debris from open milking as the pail rested between your legs or sat on the floor. As you pulled the milk from the cow, straw bedding fell into the pail. We had to replace the strainer pad sometimes before we finished. The strainer pad was a fiber disk about 5 inches in diameter.

We carried all the milk to the house which was quite some distance, then cranked up the old DeLaval cream seperator. The machine had to be cranked so fast until a warning bell would quit and Mom would open the valve and milk ran through a set of centrifugal disks seperating the cream from the milk. The cream was then stored in a can for cooking, for making butter once a week and the balance would be sold. The skimmed milk had to be carried back to the barn for hog feed or where needed. The cream seperator had to be dismantled to the last nut and washer then washed and dried after each use morning and nite.

I didn't really mind "doing chores", a term farmers used all the time, yet when folks say, "He's doing drugs" I think it's strange.

Chores came with our way of life and I knew no other way. When neighborhood men, women or young folks got together, they often spoke of happenings while "doing chores". I would go up in the hay mow up overhead, take the lantern up there and sit on a beam and dig out the hay. One morning I

opened the feed alley door and there on the floor laid a large pocket knife. I gave it to Pop and asked him where it came from. He said he never saw it before and supposed some man had slept there over night and moved on before we got up! Sleeping on the hay and with the heat from the livestock on either side kept, made a fairly comfortable sleeping quarters.

In the winter it meant light the lanterns, grab the milk pails and head out to the barn. At our house, that was quite a little walk, one that we made a number of times each day. I had certain duties, Mom had some and Dad had his. We all went about our own with no radio and no lights in the barn. The livestock were always hungry. I would climb up the shute beside the silo and pitch down enough silage to go around for cows or young cattle.

We either had too many or not enough barn cats. They were constantly changing; tigers, yellows. Black ones seemed to be less popular color but there they were a rather messy pastime while milking by hand. One could point the teat toward a passing cat and give it some licking and cleaning up to do. It was something to do to pass the time! Sometimes a cat would learn to face the cow and as the squirt came their direction, they would open their mouth and take fresh milk directly from producer to consumer. As you raised the stream, they would stand on their hind legs to stretch to get the stream. It must have been hard to see with eyes full of milk. It took a lot of lick'in!

North of our house by the other driveway was an abandoned house. While it housed residents for years, it was empty now, so Pop made it into a shop. He purchased hand tools from local farm sales until it was the best, most complete repair shop around; all old tools of little value, but they did the job. The "shop" was never locked and neighbors would come and go at will making repairs to harness, tillage tools, hay making equipment or whatever. I never remember Pop saying anything was missing. On rainy days there was often several there at a time. Dad would use those days to repair harnesses, double trees, hay slings and half sole our shoes. He repaired all our shoes; heels, soles or whatever was needed.

In the basement of the shop Mom had an incubator and places to "set" about ten or twelve hens. In the spring when a hen would show signs of wanting to set (and refused to lay eggs), Mom would put the hen on one of these nests with a required number of eggs. Three weeks later, if all went well, little chicks were poking heads out of the shells. Our flock was replaced this way each year. Sometimes she would set the incubator. This four foot square box, heated by kerosene, would accept 160 eggs that required regular turning and dampening to get a good turn out; a lot of work it was. Both Grandma and Mom preferred the slower but more reliable method of setting hens. One thing I think often was that the hens hatched their family and took care of them.

Mom had chickens in two coops much of the time. There was a coop near the house on one end of a rather large building and another down across the poun orchard near the shop. There were eggs to gather every day and feed and water had to be carried to the hens. We raised a big black chicken called the Black Langshan. They were a big husky breed, not flitey and hard to handle but quiet, good layers of big brown eggs. As they ate a lot, they made big meaty pieces for the table and also made good sellers on the market. Chicken was a frequent part of our dinner. Mom had a block of wood and a short handled ax. She had a long wire with a hook to snare a chicken, held it with one hand and lopped of the head with a single stroke. Then she would scald the innocent victim to clean off the feathers and prepare by cutting for frying and have it cooked and served at 12 noon time after time.

We had no car in early years, but one of our neighbors did. Earl Forrest had one of the early Model T's. He would take Dad to town to pay taxes, get groceries such as salt, sugar, coffee and Prince Albert smoking tobacco. When we had an emergency, Mr. Forrest would come and take us to the doctor or whatever. I can remember the time Mr. Forrest purchased a new Model T. and advised Dad to buy his used one and Dad did. Mr. Forrest agreed to teach Pop to drive the thing. Dad, however, was too independent and determined to learn the thing by himself. He took the car out into the pasture field west of our house then drove around in low

gear and reverse; stopping, starting, doing circles, up hill and down, stopping, backing up--we watched from the house because Mom wouldn't let us out that day. He got the thing mastered and we had a car too. It had a fabric top and four little doors with buttons along the side. Under the rear seat were a complete set of side curtains to put up if you were caught out in a rain storm. Dad said we didn't need the curtains for we didn't need to go if it looked like rain. From that time on he established the habit of going to town on Wednesdays, if the weather was O.K. If we ran out of baking soda, salt, pepper, can rubbers or whatever, we waited 'til Wednesday. The only time this was dismissed was serious illness or if Pop ran out of Prince Albert!

One morning when I got up to do chores sitting on the back porch putting on my shoes, Mom was starting fire in the Home Comfort Range. She said, "Go out to the garage and see the car---Poppa had a wreck last nite". I ran out to the shed but it was too dark to see well. I could make out what she said--there sat the car; no top! The top was a pile of junk fiber and bows bent and torn piled in the back seat. I ran back and asked Mom what had happened. It seems Beth had a severe case of earache which threatened her for months at a time. Dad often could stop her crying and lessen it sometimes by blowing warm smoke in her ears. This time he was unable to subdue it and the crying had gone on for several hours. Dad had driven to Ashley to get medicine from a doctor one mile south of town. He heard a bump, bump, bump, with the rotation of the wheels. He leaned out far to the left to look at the left front wheel as he was going. The next thing he knew, he entered the left ditch and the car rolled over on top of him. He said the inner tube had come out of the tire at one place and looked like a balloon and he watched it too long. When asked if he was hurt, his answer was always the same--"It will take more than a Model T to hurt me". He purchased a new 1927 Model T Ford 4 door Sedan as result of the accident. When he brought the car home from Ashley, he drove it into the driveway and let it set there all day so we could admire it. It had a few miles on it as it seems a school teacher purchased it and didn't like the 4 door style and returned it and took the

tudor she was considering. I was fascinated by the glass in the doors. I asked Mom to stand right there nearby and watch as I climbed in and to my delight I could wind the window up and down. "See Mom, when it rains, this is all we have to do!" There were other new outstanding innovations on the new car. Mr. Lom Robinette, who sold the car, pointed out the advantages of the big balloon tire size 29 x 4:40! Now he explained the advantages over the 30 x 3.50 high pressure tires on the previous car. First off, with lower pressure, a softer ride and greater flotation. The Auburn to Ashley road past our house had just been newly graveled. Neighbors and friends hauled gravel on the roadway with teams and wagons equipped with "dump boards". Many would do this sort of thing when farm work was done, for it was a means of paying taxes and the roads were in need also. Well, I recall Mr. Robinette sending prospects out to our place to see this car with these big tires 4.4 inches wide and Dad would get the car out and take them a two mile ride on the fresh gravel. He would hope to meet another car so he could turn off the center driving tracks and show how he could get back without getting stuck; it was a convincing demonstration that he enjoyed. Later the new cars came with even greater width-5.50 inches- some said that was too big.

I was eleven years old now, with a couple of sisters, Grandma, Mom and Pop. We were a growing family. There were greater needs for food and clothing. It was a busy period every day in the house. The old Singer sewing machine ran almost every day. It was sitting there unfolded with material laying there for repairs or aprons or shirts or kids clothing much of the time.

I have no idea how all the work got done in the house. Mom would dry corn, can fruit, pick raspberries almost a half a mile from the house. Dad would tell me to help her. She made cheese cloth and we put it over our heads to ward off mosquitos that were so thick in our woods, and we would pick for 2 or 3 hours at a time then carry everything back to the house tired, thirsty and hungry. Then Mom would go to work getting meals, and ever canning for winter as we had a big garden also. Uncle Charley Tompson from Ashley would come once a week. He would

bring the funnies and give me a nickle for every quart of wild groundcherries I had ready. That gave me spending money. When the huckster came by on Mondays, he would stop out in the road in front of our house and open all the doors around the big box on the back of his truck and Mom and Grandma would walk around looking at items of need, selected a few and paid him his price. He would also buy any eggs or chickens Mom would spare. He carried some empty crates on top and he would climb up there after weighing a hen or rooster, put it in the crate and settle up with Mom. We looked for him each week. He was a real part of rural life. When weather or truck problems or health brought a period of no huckster, we went to town with our chickens and eggs and cream more often.

Lew DeLucaney had a small store in Ashley and was always open to purchase chickens, ducks, etc. One time Mom reported a hen was sick in the coop unable to walk and asked Pop to "take care" of it. He put it in a burlap sack and took it along to town and walked in to see Mr. DeLucaney. He took it he had an empty chicken crate on the scales. As he poured the hen into the crate, it did not get to its feet but laid on its side. "That chicken can't stand up, it's sick," he declared. Dad said "I don't think so. It's just been in that sack too long." Mr. DeLucaney paid Pop for the chicken saying, "If that hen dies, I'll throw it out in your yard under that pear tree." Sure enough, two days later we came up to the house from doing chores and there it laid!! Pop repaid the purchase price.

Pop was a strong man physically and had spent evenings in the barrooms of Ashley in earlier days. He would walk from his home in Fairfield to Ashley wearing boots and then hide them near town, put on shoes he carried and went to Dr. Geddis' Saloon and looked for a fight. He became in many fights in early days and was a man to reckon with. He was tough and could be rough.

I remember one morning during threshing season there were about fifteen men and boys in Carl Miller's front yard waiting for shocks to dry before we could go to work. Cecil, a young man strong as a bull and always ready for a challenge said, "Charley, if it wasn't for that white hair I'd give you a lickin'." Dad made a dive for him and I never saw such

a thing. Neither one ever lost a fight and neither would give up. It was terrible and lasted for some minutes. The intense determination lead to "anything goes". When it was all over, Cecil laid still on the lawn, Dad crawled on the wagon and went to the field. It was a fight! Dad told me that he had been a security guard for the old Frank Ginivan Shows for a number of seasons and held fear for no man--I believed it!

While he was rough and tough, he was good to me. I recall no more than three or four times he ever gave me a cross word. Once after his wreck with the car, he stored the wreck on the barn floor and put the new car in the garage. Robert Bard, a cousin from Corunna, came to see us and I wanted to show him the wreck, for wrecks were a once or twice a year happening in our neighborhood. Bob knew how to start it- and he did so and I wanted to drive it- and I did; forward once, backward one time hitting the big doors just as Dad came up the stairs two steps at a time. That was once and it lasted well.

The years of early life that seem so important to me now were the 1920's. From 1920 to 1930 was the period of most growth and learning. Like a planted tree, my roots were growing under ground. Perhaps my mother could see and know, but there was little outward signs. My mother and I were together in the house as she attended to her duties in the house, the barn doing chores, in the chicken coops as she would feed and water, gathering the eggs and all related work. While I followed her whether it be to the garden or to hang up clothes, for the life of me I cannot tell how she did all the work that was expected. It was an everyday thing too; no days off, no vacation. Oh, you say, how about Sundays? Well, it was a bit different, but every bit as busy for her. Chores were the same, breakfast and cleaning up the same. Most often we had company on Sunday. Most of the relatives worked thru the week at town jobs and could come to see us on weekends. It was one of Mom's joys to have company on Saturday and especially Sunday. They were always welcome and the table was loaded so abundantly. We would just never miss a church service, so dinners on Sunday may be a bit later but they were great times. No

matter who came or at what time of day, Mom would ask if they could stay for a meal; not just Sunday but thru the week. Sometimes we didn't even know the people at all.

I recall a family moving south past our house and a rain came up. They had their possessions on a hay rack (which is a flat bed wagon about 7' wide by 16' long) piled high. They drove in under a tree. Pop helped put their team inside and Mom got them a meal.

Quite often as result of snow storms, people would be stranded at our house as workers of Ashley traveled to Auburn and Ft. Wayne to work and the hill near our place drifted so bad that cars were abandoned. One winter nite, we had two car loads, I think it was twelve or thirteen, from Ashley sleeping on the floors and couches or wherever. All were fed and watered.

There were few things that Mom could enjoy, but visiting had to be one of the greatest. If we didn't have company regulars, and things got too difficult, she had to have a break and she would go down to our neighbors. The Forrest family lived a half mile south. Now everyone should have known the Forrest family. Earl and Myrtle Forrest occupied the farm and while their family was larger, had many of the same identical problems and joys. Myrtle too was a hard working woman, devoted to raising her children right and dedicated to hard work, whatever it took. She and my mother had much in common and Mom would turn to her when we had times of great stress, financial or when Dad became so inconsiderate of her efforts. Dad was a hard worker and a good provider; for our family had shelter, plenty to eat and wear, all necessities but he was capable of being rough, tough and inconsiderate at times. He never turned on me, but I'd seen it and knew that but I developed respect for his honesty and hard work. When he would get too cross with Mom, I would leave the house for a while. I couldn't stand to hear the conversation, usually one sided it was and totally unjustified. Mom would escape down to Forrests to see Myrtle and there she was never disappointed and returned ready to get to work, washing diapers or doing chores.

It is true that we never took vacations but we had fun. I think the Creator meant for

his followers to have fun. It just may be the cheapest, most effective medicine for the human body.

We would hurry to clean up the table after supper because we were going to play cards; sometimes flinch and such but our favorite was "names." It was a simple game that was full of surprises, tension and good laughs. I remember Mom enjoying a good laugh at jokes and situations at home but an evening of "names" had its share of fun and Mom would do her share of laughing **at us, with us and at herself.** Cards were distributed evenly among all participants. They were placed face down in a pile in front of each player. Meantime, each one would select a fictitious name from a chosen category, say we chose barn animals which we did when we had new or unfamiliar members playing with us. When everyone had decided upon a name, (and the more who played, the better) the dealer would ask each one in turn to declare loud and clear the chosen farm animal; horse, cow, pig, chicken and such, clear around the table. Perhaps we would go around again to get it well established. Now the dealer would take the top card of his pile, grasp the two corners farthest from him and flip the card over to let it fall face up directly in front of his pile. As he does so in that exact way, he and all other players view the card simultaneously. If it falls with no match around the table, the next player would turn one from the top of his pile and as this proceeded around the table a matching card would eventually fall. We used Flinch cards of 1- 2- 3- 4- 5- etc. As a card fell and was a match to someone else, a race developed to see who could call out the "others" established name before his name was called. Now with horses and cows and chickens it wasn't too difficult but as we got to playing this, we used names of neighbors, first and last, or we used animals of the zoo; ardvark, Tasmanian devil, kinds of fish and such. We would set and laugh at two contestants trying for 30 seconds or more to come up with the correct name. The one who first recalls the other is the winner and gets to give away all the accumulated cards from the exposed pile. Sometimes it got so noisy with yelling that Dad would call us down. We would each try to choose the most difficult and unfamiliar name. That's the way it went.

Sometimes we had company and they would say, "Can we play that game again?" We knew which one and we would pull down the hanging lamp above the kitchen table and turn up our adrenalin to compete. It was healthy good fun. After about four of those games, it was nice to sit quietly back and rest and relax because it could be so very hectic and we loved it. It was good fun.

Books are not large enough to hold the great experiences with the Forrest kids. We had such a good time-- everytime! We had no money, they had little; they were wittier and had great sense of humor which carried us through tough times. We played games together, usually at night, more often at nite because of daytime work. Mr. Forrest raised potatoes and onions which required much hard hand labor, but with no lights in the community all but some chores or emergencies were completed before dark. The kerosene lamps and lanterns were inadequate for work but the little light it gave shining from the parlor or kitchen windows was dim enough to allow one to hide beside a tree or chimney and jump out scaring the daylighters out of the one who was "it" and take off to beat him or her back to the base and thereby was home free. We would get together nite after nite and play in the yards around the house. The Miller kids, from the next house north of us, would come also. We would spend an entire evening running in various games playing dare base, tap the ice box, freezeout, pump pump pullaway and such games like hide and seek and tag; running for two or three hours at a time, sometimes running in the dark thru the hedge fence and all. Very little time was lost consoling someone who was injured. Now and then someone got hurt, but no one paid attention; so things just went on just as if nothing happened. There wasn't time to rub your leg or wrap up a finger or inspect a bruise, as long as we had fun. If you had a knot on your head, you might as well get up and keep going, for no one cared about it. These were great times for use with a great family.

When cold weather and snow came, there was a different set of activities. We would line up in a row in foot deep snow and make a big circle. Each one would shuffle their feet so the circle was a nice path. Then we cut the circle into pieces like a pie and

made a "home" base in the center where the hub of this wheel was. The "it" would dart out of the spokes to tag another and yet keep all from the center base because they were immune to his touch if were successful in getting there. We would take a lantern or two to the pond at nite with our ice skates and skate a couple of hours racing and playing "dare base".

As we got older, we outgrew those grade school running games but I think they served a purpose and helped make healthy bodies.

Looking back now, there remains several mysteries to our early life. How we lived so well, the best of food, friends and activity with no money, day after day, week after week. Another thing, how all that work got done; the house work was tremendous, the farm work was all done with horses and walking. One thing remains unsolved; how did Mom find time to listen. She was a good listener. I'd like to tell her what I had done yesterday or last nite; she was interested and always had time to listen to me. Seems as I grew up I should have been a good listener as I benefitted greatly from her in this regard. I am the world's poorest listener. She loved me so much, only she knew the full price she paid and took great interest in everything I did at church, home, school, with neighbors or at work or play. It was my pleasure to relate to her and she hung on every word.

As a child, I remember there were certain days that came each year that were more interesting and eventfull than the norm. One of them occurred around Thanksgiving when the ground was well frozen and that was butchering day. It began for me when I woke up early and while yet dark, from my upstairs window see Dad building a big, big fire under the big black kettles out by the plum orchard; carrying water from the spring and windmill he would fill the two kettles. Chores were done quickly and soon after daylight Earl Forrest would always come and often Forrest Miller would be there too. These two men were professionals in every sense of the word. When it came to butchering and cutting up meat, they experienced few surprises. Each had their own knives, one for each individual task. No one touched another's knife without

permission. They kept them sharp. A platform was built of planks and heavy sawhorses with a wooden barrel at the end. When water in the kettle got scalding hot, Dad would shoot a hog. Earl Forrest would always stick them for bleeding. He was clever at it. Now Pop raised Chester White hogs and while we had little money, we had the very best of everything to eat, including pork. Prior to this day, Dad would have sorted out five of the best hogs he had; smooth, uniform and weighing 235 to 250 lbs. In those days we had much need for lard and sausage. After the hog bled out sufficiently, it was lifted up on the platform and the angled barrel filled with near boiling water. Strong men and boys were required to lift the hog up and down until the hair came loose easily. All would then grab scrapers and remove all the hair from head to tail. The Chester White made a good looking piece from this point. Now the work became more diversified; hanging the hog, gutting the hog (which was to remove the small intestines called "cassings") then proceeding to cut up as desired. The cassings were turned over to the women folk. Often, Myrtle Forrest came to help Mom that day. The cassings had to be cleaned of all trace of waste, washed and washed and washed, preparing them for use that afternoon. The men cut up the meat as Pop desired; hams, shoulders, pork chops or back bone, ribs and so forth. For sure, there was plenty of work for all who came to help. Five hogs of that size required a lot of hands, busy hands. Much of the meat was cut into small strips to be ground into sausage by hand. Now we kids had a job; to turn the crank, grinding the tubs and buckets of meat. This was a drag because it was more fun to see the men slaughtering outdoors. The meat had to be ground before the fun started. Now we would quarrel over who could crank the sausage stuffer. The sausage stuffer doubled as a lard press also later in the day. The ground meat was placed in the cylinder holding about three gallon. The clean prepared cassings, resting in cold water, was now put into use. Cut into six foot lengths, stripped on over a small horn at the bottom of the press would capture and contain the meat as the pressure forced it out the horn. Sometime we would have two tubs to contain sausage. It was fun to turn the

crank and see the manufacture of sausage. The trick was to make it uniform in size by restricting the pull of cassings to the turn of the crank. Lots of laughs came from this activity every year. As the men wound up the operation in the afternoon, they placed hams and shoulders in large 20 to 30 gallon crocks of salt water. (When an egg would float, then you knew there was enough salt.) When the heavy slaughtering work neared end, sometimes some of the help would leave as little help was needed to render the lard. The fat had been stripped from the meat all day and now collected and placed in the big kettles to be cooked down to grease. Fat was cut in chunks (small squares) and when cooked down, the lard press was used again. This time the chunks of fat were dipped into the press and squeezed with tremendous pressure, lard ran out leaving a dry drumbly residue we called "cracklins". We ate 'em fresh and so good they were. Sometimes Dad would butcher a beef the same darn day later in the afternoon. This was not the lengthy and detailed job as the hogs. Sometimes Mom prevailed upon him to put that off 'til Christmas time. It was a short job in all, a couple of hours. He always selected a good animal from the young cattle and fed them well. Steak and ribs were a regular diet at our house so that we were tired of such. At the reunions and picnics, we looked for bologna and weiners--now THAT was a treat!!!

One of Dad's personal accomplishments was to make home brew. On the north side of our house was an outside cellar way to the basement. There was a good sized room down there used at one time for storing wood for the furnace. Pop wouldn't use the furnace because it consumed too much wood. We used a room stove and the kitchen range to provide the necessary heat. Now, this basement room became the brewery. I didn't like the smell and seldom if ever went down there except when I had to. I don't remember helping with the wine - grape, dandelion or whatever - but the home brew was different. Dad would mix it up and tend to it diligently until it was matured. Then he would tell me to help. He would take a small funnel and dipper to fill his bottles. My job was to cap the bottles. He had a small capper on a board. I would set each bottle on it and place a cap

on top then force the lever down hard and close the cap snugly over the top, forcing down hard enough to do the job, yet not to break the bottles. It was a sticky and smelly mess and I think that's why I didn't want to drink any. I don't recall ever tasting the product. I recall the trouble when, for some reason, they began to blow up. I think we sealed it up too soon. Anyhow, it sounded down there like the Martins and Coys picnic and oh what a mess. Floor to rafters all dripping and Dad was mad too!!

Mom and Grandma never approved of this activity, but Grandma accepted it in part because many things were better for her. Pop was paying for the farm giving her income, food and her future was greatly improved. Dad was an expert fisherman and hunter and Grandma liked fish especially, and we had them often. Mom let us know she did not approve, but Dad was a hard worker, a good provider and we were a large demanding family.

Many stories could be told of these home brew related incidents, but they would serve little purpose so I will mention one only. After repeated trips to the basement which was near where the men were butchering all day, Forrest Miller prepared to go home a quarter mile north of our house. He had a Model T truck with all his scaffolds, ropes, hooks and butchering equipment loaded. He had some little difficulty and I noticed as we loaded, he kept removing his cap and replacing it on his head for no apparent reason. I heard Pop tell him he could go right on around the house and head beside the katalpa tree to the south driveway and out to the road. He started out. Now the old katalpa tree that stood 15 feet from our back door had a huge limb that hung down and interfered with going in and out. It had been sawed off and a 6 foot limb stuck out. As a long stub it was too high to make trouble but remained quite solid and was handy for some things. As Forrest drove very slowly behind the house, he centered the truck between the tree and step. With his foot on the low gear and the hand throttle set at a moderate speed, he was doing well until the stub limb of the tree came in the right corner of the windshield under the cloth top. The truck continued to go forward uninterrupted; the top remained on the limb, at least parts of it

did. Gently, but thoroughly, the top came off. I called to Pop, who had gone in the shed and missed it all, to come out as I ran around to the front to meet and see what it looked like. There came Forrest out of the drive and into the road, went right on and never stopped; some top dragging on the side; some on the scaffolding behind. Forrest set there, out in the open, never stopping and went right on home.

Weeks later, the butchering process was completed by Mom canning meat for warm weather. Dad would use sawdust and chunks of wood in a little smoke house where he hung hams and shoulders and yards of sausage keeping a curl of smoke day and nite until satisfied of the texture and taste. In the back porch, we hung the hams and such. Each was put in a flour sack saved for that purpose with a hook thru the meat that kept it attached to ceiling rafters and free of cats and rodents. The smoked meat was truly first class and a favorite of company, visitors and gifts to friends from time to time. Mom would slip a portion to someone now and then for she had little else to give.

Dad was a hunter and fisherman. Thru the winter after a light snow, he would grab a few shells and take his old double barreled 12 gauge shot gun and shoot a few rabbits. He knew where and when to find them. I would go with him and later he gave me a gun. I was never as successful as he, but for a time I enjoyed hunting. Pop would dress the rabbits upon return and hang the carcass on the clothesline to freeze - they did - like a rock! Mom would go out and collect them, thaw them and prepare them brown and tasty they were. It was interesting to hunt with Dad and watch how he did it all, but never learned to be dependable as he. I remember the day he raised the gun to shoot and didn't pull the trigger; did so again, didn't shoot and that was strange for him that he didn't. He called me over to him to look at his eye. He was blind in his right eye and didn't know it 'til then.

He gave me a single shot 12 gauge and told me I could have it to hunt with if I'd go alone. I did. One time walking through Riley King's woods, I looked in a hollow stump and saw a furry animal down in there. I took the barrel of the gun and poked it. It was frozen stiff. I pulled it out and carried it home. Pop

was shelling corn in the corn crib. I hurried out and showed it to him. "What is it Pop?", I asked. He took one look and said, "I'll give you \$2.00 for it." "What is it?", I asked again. Pop said, "If you want to sell it, I'll give you \$2.00 for it, do you want to sell it or not?". I still hesitated and then he added, "If you don't want to sell it to me, throw it out in the shed and we'll take it along to Eberly's when we go to town". We did, and the fur buyer gave me \$2.50 for the coon.

Winters were harsh in those days and brought intense hardships for the rural families. The pumps froze up outdoors. After the ground froze so deep, livestock could not water at ponds and depended on wells pumped by hand or windmill if all was working. The roads would drift more due to rail fences nearness to the roadway and the growth attracted heavy snow. At times it would be days before they were opened and then it may be groups of men with big scoop shovels opening mile by mile to get to town. There were two neighbors near us that had electricity by means of a Delco generator motor of a series of batteries. Forrest Miller and Clarence King had electric lights. We had kerosene lamps that we carried from room to room as needed and several lanterns that we carried to the barn to do chores. When one wanted to read the paper, study a lesson or look at a book, it was necessary to be near the lamp. Every morning Mom would clean the lamp chimneys and refill them with kerosene.

One of the last acts before going to bed was to run out behind the house to the toilet. If you wanted a light - take a lantern -, bundle up good and trudge out thru the snow. Now the door may not be closed tightly and the seat may be covered with snow. You brush that off and sit on the coldest, smoothest hard board ever. The last years Sears Roebuck catalog was somewhere; you brush off the snow, complete the hurried visit and get back to the house, stomp off your feet and snuggle up to the stove 'til someone hollered that you clothes were smelling or smoking!

We had comfortable beds, big deep feather ticks they were called, big thick mattresses filled with chicken feathers. Mom would fluff them up loose and you would sink down in and when you pulled the big thick comforters

over you, well, you were snug as a bug 'til you woke up. There may be a surprise for you to open your eyes to see you breath, snow sifting across the top blanket and window sill nearby all covered with little drifts of snow. Old windows, loose, no insulation and means to seal well, let a great abundance of fresh air in day and nite.

We did not experience a great amount of sickness. I think our style of life and dirt from early age helped develop a strong immune system. We experienced childhood diseases like measles, whooping cough and such. We did catch cold on occassion and the treatment of that was so extreme that nowadays it would border on child abuse!

If Mom heard you cough twice or more, you could expect a visit from her soon after you got snuggled down in bed. She would enter your bedroom, pull down the covers and place on your chest a sack of fried onions 3" thick and 18" square with ties around your neck and under your ribs. To survive this ordeal you had to take a deep breath hold it and hold your nose until the hot onions were secured and the covers pulled tightly up under your chin. It was terrible, but effective. Next day, all gone, good as new unless you got your feet wet again or other bad luck. I was in the 7th grade when I missed my first day of school and then it was because the teacher thought Beth had Scarlet Fever and they made me stay home too.

Every year we gathered ginseng roots, sassafrass, pennyroyal and others which were used as medicine. We made tea from catnip, peppermint, hickory nut shucks; whatever the need dictated.

There was another health aid that was effective. It was "Grandpa's salve". Grandma made it from an old recipe handed down a couple or three generations made with lard, carbolic acid and other things. They would store it for some time and use it for all serious cuts and abrasions. If you neglected a sliver or rusty nail wound in your foot, and a big red circle warning surfaced, you got a wrapping with Grandpa's salve. After Grandma's death, someone came and folks tried to recall the ingredients as they wanted to manufacture the stuff. No one could recall all the strange things in little bottles that were used so they gave up on it. Mom never

sold any; she would give it to folks that had a need and that was the end of it.

When Aunt Irma would come to visit us, there was much laughing and fun. Not all fun for me however, because she would bring along her clippers and insist upon cutting my hair - every darn time. I think if no one was talking or asking Aunt Irma questions, things may have gone better but she would begin by squeezing the clippers vigorously and cutting went well, but as time went along she would slow down squeezing and the clippers pulled the hair and hurt so much, it could make tears at times. I knew it was going to happen but that made no difference!

Christmas was a special time with lots of company and friends coming by. We always had a tree in the bay window area. Dad made dishpans of popped corn. Mom gave us each a needle and white thread. We would thread yards and yards of popcorn and encircle the tree again and again. Pop would order a new milk pail at Sears Roebuck. It came with six divisions of candy; chocolate drops, hard tack, gum drops, etc. It was a treat. We hung our stockings each year and an orange, pack of gum and candy bar would be found there. One year Grandma gave everyone a hatchet for Christmas. She had bought ten of them all the same. We had popcorn balls for a month after christmas it seemed.

One morning I saw a fresh rabbit track around our house and into a culvert across our driveway at the road. "Yup," Dad said, "He's in there." He said he would go to the shop, make a box trap like the old days and show us how they caught them alive. He made the trap. We all went out to the road to see him sit it at the entrance to the culvert. Just as he put it in place, a car went by. I saw it was some kind of policeman. I also saw it slow down immediately and turn around at the church heading back. "Pop," I said. "That was a policeman and he is coming back." Pop never looked up. "Let him come." He did; jumped out of his car, grabbed the box trap, opened the trunk of this 2 door coupe, threw the trap in and locked the lid. "Hey," Dad said, "What are you doing with my box trap?" "You can't do that", the young officer said. "I'm the Game Warden here and that's against the law." Dad said, "There's a rabbit in this tile and I just made that box trap to show the kids how we used

to catch rabbits." Unimpressed, the young man wrote out a ticket and said, "Can you come to Auburn Thursday?" "I guess so," said Pop. Away went the officer. I was scared; the girls ran inside to tell Mom but Dad didn't say anymore. I had fear all week of Dad going to jail and what would we do? Thursday came and Dad made no effort to get set to go to Auburn. Finally I asked him, "Pop, aren't you going to Auburn today?" "Nope! I ain't going," he said. "Dad," I said, "That young guy means business. You better go." He said, "Shut up! I ain't a-going." He didn't! Next week, several days later anyhow, we were working at the barn and fear struck in my heart when I saw the young officer coming down to the barn walking fast in hat and uniform. "Dad", I said, "Here comes the Game Warden -- he's after you." "Let him come" was all he said. He did! I hid behind a big feed box nearby where I could hear. He lit into Pop a mile a minute. "Why didn't you come to Auburn?" Answer: "I ain't going to Auburn." "You said you would the other day." "Well, what I'm telling you today and the other day is different. I ain't going and besides that you better put my box trap on the front porch of my house or I'm going to have you arrested", Dad said rather important like. Well, they both simmered down and walked to the house together, went to the basement a while and it was all over that quick! The young officer's name was Tevis and he ran into a stubborn old Dutchman!

Springtime brought a wave of new activities with optimism on the farm. We made maple syrup almost every spring. We had a lot of maple trees and opened one end of the woods each year. We would gather the sap from 160 trees, using the team hitched to a stone boat with a large round gathering tank, hauling sap to an evaporator. It took hours and days of boiling sap, day and nite to make up wards of 100 gallons. Pop boiled down sap to syrup that weighed 11 lbs. to the gallon. We got \$1.50 to \$1.75 per gallon.

The barn held little calves in the spring. The hog houses were briming with little pigs. Mom was setting hens and hatching little chicks.

One time a farm was for sale near us. We lived about one mile north of it. Seems there was a tax sale and they auctioned it

off. Pop bought the 80 acre farm for \$1,600. It had 18 acres of good woods and Dad sold some timber but not a great lot. We cleaned and burned bushes and trash so it could be farmed. No barn there just an old straw shed that Dad burned down to clean up. There was a small house and we rented it to whoever needed it. Among those who lived there was Uncle Austin Benjamin and family. One time while working alone back over the big hill, I could hear someone call for help. It was so weak and faint I was uncertain of reality. I did follow up the call and found Aunt Ada trapped in a small room upstairs in the small house. The door blew shut and locked. She was there 'til someone came home. We liked each other that day and joked about it long afterward. Dad later sold the "other place" as we called it, for \$3,200 to Basil Ault who still owns that place as of this writing.

There was a time after Grandma died that Dad had a hired man. Mr. Jay Mead, who worked a number of years for Marion Clark, a neighbor. He ended his period there and worked for Dad for quite some time. When I was old enough to begin working the team, he often expressed the fact he would soon be pushed out of the job as I grew up and could carry the load.

One evening we drove out of Lester Monroe's barnyard. Jay was driving the team, having hauled bundles all day, he drove thru some weeds. The wheels ran over an old windshield laying there. He worried about that all the way home. Dad was gone fishing that evening when we got home and chores done. We ate supper and I went out in the front yard. Jay came out and told me he was going down to Lester's and pay him for that windshield. "It was junk, you know that, and we'll be back there tomorrow", I said, but he walked out and down the road. As he got near Lester's, a couple cars were coming by to pass him. He waited for one and stepped in front of the other and was killed instantly by the impact. There was no reason to cite the driver. Jay was a mysterious man, always carried a gun until he came to our house because Dad forbid it. He was a Westerner with some early events of which he never would tell. Whenever a strange person drove in at our house, he would stay in his room or stay in the barn until they were gone. He

would not go to Auburn or to town anyplace, but he was good to us.

Tractors began to show up in our community. Lester Monroe had an IHC model 8-16, meaning 8 hp on the draw bar and 16 hp on a belt. A strange looking machine! Lee Wise bought a new and more modern larger model 10-20. He taught himself to drive it. He began by plowing a field east of their house. There was a big tree near the center of the field. He told us he was worried about running into that tree when he got over that far. It took hours pulling 2 14" plows. His fear was well founded though for when he got there, he ran into the only tree in the field!

Carl Rinehart had a Minneapolis Moline. It had big drive wheels in front. The driver sat far behind on an extended frame that supported plows and cultivators. The rear wheels steered. Carl had one of the big trucks and hauled our livestock in a Reo truck in early years. But in 1929, Earl Forrest bought a great truck, a 1 1/2 ton model A truck. It was a faithful work-horse and benefitted the Forrest family and all the neighbors for many years. That same year, the family purchased a model A Ford convertible. It too, was a great car and served the family for many many miles.

Forrest Miller bought a new Farmall, a new innovation with tricycle-type narrow front wheels that gave it great maneuverability.

The tractor was designed to cultivate row crops as well as plowing and tilling the soil. These new innovations brought some unusual events until operators learned to manage them. Mr. Miller gave a steering wheel a flip to demonstrate how short it would turn for those of us nearby. The tractor got away and went up the side of the grain shed as a loading chute was leaning against the siding. It went up about six feet, the front wheels went thru a window and there it stopped as the drawbar lifted the wheels free of traction. The crowd of neighbors witnessed this demonstration.

George Dilley bought a used tractor yet painted and reconditioned was very serviceable. Dad traded a team of mules and paid near \$500 for a good used Farmall with plows and cultivators that was traded in by Lafayette Blue. It was a good tractor and did a lot of work and we no longer heeded a hired man and cut the horses needed with related

chores. It was all steel wheels. The big drive wheels had spade lugs and front wheels were iron with steel skid rims. We had to devise rims to cover the spade lugs so we could drive it on the road later. Those early tractors had no road or travel gear, only two or three forward gears and work speed. The iron seat reported every stone encountered and when driven over frozen ground, you remained awake!

I would plow and prepare seed bed with the tractor but planting was done with the horses. Dad would plant all our corn with the use of a "checking wire" that was first rolled out the full length of the corn field and secured at each end by iron stakes and pulled tight. The planter then was maneuvered along side the stretched wire, a lever on the outside edges of the planter accepted the wire at each end of the field and as the team pulled the planter along side the wire passed thru a slot. The regular spacing of knots on the wire would trip the opening from the seed box depositing two or three kernels of seed in a hill. Back and forth with a clack, clack all day long pulling up the stakes at each end to reset them again along side the planter. If wire was kept at even stretch to trip the planter, the corn came up in a 4 square pattern. This was desired so one could cultivate both lengthwise and crosswise. We depended upon cultivation and hand labor entirely to eradicate weeds. The horse-drawn cultivator, most popular, required a 2 horse team. As the team would straddle the row, two gangs of shovels straddled the row with each gang steered by wooden handles offset so the operator could walk to one side. The trick was to not cover the little infant plant and if you did, to quickly uncover it with your foot as you walked along without stopping the horses and going back to rescue it.

Small grain was planted with a drill that dropped small grain, oats, wheat and soybeans, in more solid and continuous line with rows 8" apart, planting 12 or 13 rows at a time.

We raised tomatoes for a local cannery at Ashley. Special care was given to the 3 or 5 acres to be planted to this crop. The company supplied a machine to set the fragil plant. The operator sat on top of a 60 gallon tank of water while two setters were

comfortably seated near the ground one on either side of a large shoe with packer wheels on either side. As the team pulled the planter, the two "setters" with trays of plants to select handfulls, would alternate one and the other sticking plants behind the shoe as it opened the soil supporting the plant upright as it passed between the packing wheels. The trick here was proper depth and more importantly set the plant at the correct moment that a portion of water was dropped from the supply tank. If you missed the water drop, the plant usually would die in 48 hours and replanting was needed, not a fun job either. I set a lot of plants, but never got anywhere as clever at it as the Forrest kids. I've seen them on occasion set the plants alone, not every other one, but every click of water, every second that was instead of 2 second intervals. Tomatoes gave the farmer a cash crop in the fall when kids entered school, but required so much hand labor, hoeing the young plants, picking, hauling all required time and labor.

We raised strawberries also, setting out small plants and waiting a full year for the first production. Hand work involved also in picking day after day. A case of picked berries for a customer might bring \$3.00 for 24 quarts.

We had a plum orchard and sold plums from 75¢ to \$1.65 per bushel. All these endeavors brought in cash that was needed and also utilized the kids labor to help siphon off energy and keep 'em busy it did!

Hay making was a summer on-going thing by mowing grass then waiting 3 days to dry then rake up in rows and the hay was loaded on the wagon and hauled to the barn. Here the team would hoist it from the wagon by use of slings placed underneath the loose hay or by resetting a pronged fork again and again.

Grain harvest was a community cooperation thing in those days. Dad would cut the grain with a machine called a binder. It cut off a 7 ft. swath of wheat and it fell onto a platform canvas. There it was elevated by another set of canvas and rollers to a knotting device. Near the knotter were two balls of binder twine fed under and around packers compressing the 3 ft. stalks at regular intervals. The twine would encircle the bundle and tie it tightly, cut the string and expell the sheaf of grain onto the

ground. If all went well, that is; the knotter was a very tempermental gadget that was frustrating to adjust and keep interested in its work. We set the bundles in shocks to cure and dry for 2 or 3 weeks before threshing began. When the neighborhood was all ready, Carl Miller would get out the big steam engine. Brown Albright would ready the seperator. Nick Rowe would hitch up a team of mules to a water wagon, they called it, and the threshing began. We boys would drive the bundle wagons, the men would pitch bundles in the field and others would haul the threshed grain from machine to bins. Our job was to load the bundles as they were pitched up to us from the ground. There was a system to follow as you would drive your team from shock to shock in the field, one would load a row on the out edge with the butts out and grain heads toward the center. Then use the next bundles to bind the outter rows by laying two rows down the center, thus you would build the load as high as you could haul and as high as your pitcher could reach. You were expected then to haul the load to the side of the threshing machine, pitching them one by one into the feeder. The grain was beat out and directed to one side to be sacked and hauled. The straw blown in a large pile at a place determined.

The big steam engine was quiet and powerfull but the seperator was a dirty, noisy contraption with tremendous appetite.

The boys, as a rule, enjoyed "going threshing" as it was a get-to-gether thing, at least when the season began, but I dare say all were glad when it was done and the last field was cleaned up. We made the rounds twice each summer; first with wheat then oats. The greatest thing was the meals the women would get ready. They too would help one another. Seems they tried to out-do each other supplying the best food they could. There were some standards that we could count on: mashed potatoes and gravy, two or three kinds of meat, the best was there-the very best, steak, chicken, sausage and dishes of cabbage and garden produce and fruit and always pies of every kind. One need only to imagine feeding 20 to 24 men and boys-teenage boys at that! It was a great time. Teams were unhitched, watered and fed on the wagon racks. Men and boys made a beeline for the house at 11:30 a.m. Here we

would find a couple tubs of warm water on chairs or benches with soap, rags and towels then on into the house for dinner. It was a social time, a fun time, a rest and story time for a few minutes after dinner under the shade trees.

It was one of those times when Earl Skelly opened the garage doors to show us his brand new 1931 Ford Coupe; blue-black with yellow wire wheels. It was a beauty! It was one of these after dinner visiting times in 1933 that Ebon Albright and Orval Myers said they were going to the Chicago World Fair. It was called a Century of Progress 1833 to 1933. I had never been away from home and didn't expect to go, but as they told of what they expected to see, I went over where Pop was talking with the other men. Maybe we had a good year, maybe it was after a big dinner there at Herman Meloys, maybe it was the fresh can of Prince Albert, but his answer was, "Oh, I don't care!" Those simple words opened the door to a great experience.

Ebon Albright, a neighbor boy, was somewhat older and easy to get along with. He had a 1929 Chevrolet tudor, a nice car indeed. Glenn Westbrook, a close friend of mine, also went making four of us. One rainy nite in August we started. Ebon drove to near Plymouth in on and off rain. He told us we were now half way to Chicago. We would sleep awhile. Glenn and Orval slept in the back seat; Ebon and I were in front. I couldn't sleep. Ebon slept little so we started up again around 2 a.m. We were parked by the depot at Plymouth and there were lights and trains and too much anticipation for me, I was wide awake. We were going in on Highway 41 along the lake and all eyes for sights we had never seen. Even at daybreak there were all kinds and makes of cars and trucks, big apartment buildings, hotels and churches and of course the biggest lake in the world--you couldn't see the end of it! As we neared the Exposition, Ebon saw a sign "Room for rent". We stopped there and engaged the room for that nite. We had to sit in the car and wasted time 'til the lady woke up. Seemed the room was seven or eight dollars for one nite, but we split the cost four ways and it was so near the entrance that Ebon thought we should. We spent that entire day and evening in the fairgrounds. We stuck together for safety reasons and went from exhibit to

exhibit all day long. I knew it would be great but it far exceeded my expectations. We missed very little that day. The greatest thing for me was the Barney Oldfield show at the Chrysler exhibit. It was something to watch those drivers put new Plymouth cars thru demonstrations, jumping ramps, sliding to a stop with those hydraulic brakes, precision driving by skilled professionals and if you had patience to stand in line, everyone got a free ride around the track in a new Dodge, Plymouth, DeSoto or Chrysler. I wanted to ride in the marvelous futuristic Chrysler Air-Flow. I tried several times, but the line was always too long and rode in a new Plymouth instead.

We had a good room and was sure glad to get to it that nite. It was nearby, Ebon had known what to do; we were back the next day to do it all over again. We joined the huge crowd several times to see Sally Rand dance on stage and demonstrate the benefits of form fitting clothing! The Sally Rand Fan Show was free and we joined the huge crowd several times to see her perform. She was already a nationally known figure-or had a nationally known figure!!!!

We discussed taking a ride on the sky way that crossed an area of the fairground. I remember it to be perhaps 75 - 100 ft. above the ground. After several discussions, we decided to take a ride on it. We lined up to get tickets and Glenn and Orval changed their mind. I was so close to doing so, but Ebon put up a brave front and I wouldn't back out now, so on we went. First into an elevator that carried you to the top of the tower. It was a thrill in itself. No backing out now. When it stopped we could look out over the fairground far and wide. People stood below like a field of wheat. We joked a little - all put on to show how relaxed we were, then they herded us into a car resting on a track. The cars were narrow and long. We were put in the last two seats in the back end of a car. A narrow isle let folks walk to seats on either side by windows. I think about six folks on a side. Quickly the car was full and moving on its track toward the direction of the hugh cables above. As it left the solid comforting support of the track that encircled the tower, it rolled of into space hanging by a center support on the cable. Coming out, the nose dipped down and then as it cleared the tower,

the nose went up and our extreme rear end went down--way down! It was a feeling we would never forget. The back of my seat went back and I could hear it cracking and snapping as Ebon had his hands on the top most part. I did the same to the seat in front as we went down after that dip to rise a time or two it stablized and we could open our eyes and look down again. What a ride it was, how we told the others they should have gone. It was GREAT, but once was enough. We still talk of it.

Late afternoon of the second day, we started home. We drove outside of Chicago and we were all so tired and needed rest. Ebon pulled off the road at a quiet spot along road 6. We parked there and all laid down by the car and slept. We arrived home later that day with a multitude of stories. Mom was interested in every one. Dad too listened intently partly because of his experiences in Chicago when he was a railroader and spent much time there. I sorted out some cards and souvenirs and among them was a people-mover bus, a replica of the big one in use at this fair. I was proud of that but later it disappeared as time went by. I had spent nearly \$20 on the trip. I had \$20 and came home with \$1 and some pennies, saying it was well worth it all.

In 1934 the following year, the fair was rerun again and I revisited for one day only. Seems the second year Harper Norman, of Hudson, was charging \$5 per person to take his school bus for transportation to and from the fair. Dick Henderson wanted to go and his parents said OK if I would go along. I did. Leaving Hundson around 4 a.m. and returning late, late that nite made a one day look at the exposition for many folks that summer.

Many things came so easily in the spring of the year. Strange dogs would show up in the church yard. I would keep my eye on that area. We had a small apple orchard extending from the south side of our house to the church yard. I found if I was carefull, I could get up close to some of the dogs. Folks would take them from home to avoid the tax due in the spring and the church yard was the occasional drop off place. I was permitted to keep a black and white Collie one time. Dad called it a Border Collie. With a binder twine, I brought it home and when I showed it to the folks, it was OK. This dog was a natural with

livestock. We had Blackie for a number of years and was a faithful worker. She seemed to sense what were trying to do when we were moving hogs or going after the cattle. In fact, one time when a little pig got caught in the fence and was squealing, I jumped over the fence and was knelt down to unravel it from the wires when the old mother sow came charging down on me. Blackie jumped the fence, caught the angry sow by the ear and around and around they went 'til I got out of the lot. That could have been a bad accident for me and perhaps muscles torn in my leg that could have had lasting effect.

Another thing in spring, the Gypsies would come to set up camp in the church yard. Now not many things really kept Dad's attention, but that did. We were so close there and we had two chicken coops nearby. All buildings were secured as best we could when they came. We watched them but didn't go near or bother. They would move on before Sunday church came. They had tents and dogs, men, women and children. I don't know how they made a living, but both Mom and Dad and Grandma were relieved when they left.

During this time, the Federal Government went thru the county installing airplane beacon lights every so many miles, maybe fifty mile intervals, to prepare a flight path from Chicago to Cleveland. One was set up at Sim Hamman's, a little east of our house. It was something to see that electric light flash into the dark sky or on low clouds every nite no matter what the weather was.

The air mail flights began earlier but they were limited to daytime only. The first pilots would fly along just south of the Wabash railroad. They flew quite low and we would stop whatever we were doing and watch them go over. Single engine biplanes with radial engines carrying the mail. The Chicago/Cleveland route then was expanded to night time also. There were many stories of these planes at that time. Their dash gauges often were not lighted and the pilots carried flashlights to check the gauges and compass etc. Sometimes they flew so low at nite following the chain of lights yet we couldn't see them. In daytime one could see the pilots sometimes in those old open cockpit planes.

Later, a passenger plane service was initiated. The carriers used Ford built Tri-

Motors aircraft, seating twelve passengers with a crew of two. One morning when we reached the school house, Herbert Hill, a classmate, told us boys one of those big Tri-Motors had made an emergency landing in their corn field. I said I wanted to see it and I'd like someone to go along with me at noon. I was going to skip my lunch bucket and run out there and see it. I could make it back before the bell rang. I took off on a dead run approximately 1 1/2 to 2 miles at most. I made it out there and there by the road in the mud laid this giant aircraft. No wheels, one engine torn off, the engine propeller was bent, the left engine was still on the wing yet, but propeller also was cockeyed. There was no one else there. I couldn't believe it. I walked around it, then opened the door and went inside. With undercarriage gone, it laid in the ground like a boat. I walked to the front where pilot and co-pilot seats were. All was intact and interesting to see. Quickly I had to get out and made a dash for school. We learned later that west of here some hinges broke on the rudder, it then tilted forcing the elevators down slightly and thus the plane was set into a descend mode, lower and lower until it struck the ground east of Ashley on the north side of the rail tracks, bounced up to about 75 ft. high and came down again on the south side of the tracks in a muddy corn field knocking down some corn shocks 'til it came to a stop with no serious injury to a single passenger. They disassembled the plane and hauled it away but it was an experience to see and feel it.

Flying caught on quickly. Lindberg's historic flight from New York to Paris, nonstop, in the single engine Ryan monoplane made flying something to reckon with. Individuals

with the yen for excitement went around the country in these open cockpit planes giving people rides over their farm or village for \$2.00 each. Some Sundays you would find them operating from a pasture field near town. I went down to the Auburn Airport, about a mile North of Auburn, and took my first ride with Bill Fitzsimmons. Bill was a very accomplished pilot and had a beautiful Waco taper wing he could fly it thru a doorway if he desired. He piloted from the rear cockpit in helmet, goggles and scarf; he was a picturesque character. I got my \$2.00



worth. Planes landed in fields where I was farming several times. Once a plane came along side of my tractor. It was from Ohio, lost and trying to find Kendallville which was 15 miles away to the west. One landed where I was plowing and upon turning around, dropped a wheel in a woodchuck hole. That plane was piloted by Lavon Forrest Eyster. She was one of the first women pilots from our area. One landed near our house in corn stubble and the stiff stubble tore the fabric loose near the tail. Angola held air shows each year in June. The pilots held races, acrobatic flying and gave rides.

Radios captured the imagination of many folks when first introduced. I can remember the first one I could hear talk. Aunt Irma invited us to visit them at Stroh, Indiana. Her son, Harold Treesh, had a radio and the letter told us we could all come and hear music being broadcast from somewhere in Ohio. We went. I couldn't wait as Harold showed us the long antenna that he put up across their backyard. He waited 'till 2 p.m., then put on a headset, placed himself on a chair in front of a big Atwater Kent radio. He worked slowly from dial to dial, knob to knob, turning and listening. When he got it tuned in and all synchronized as desired, he let us put on the headphones. One by one we could hear music, then a voice talking, then more music. It was uncanny and made great conversation. Later, Riley King purchased a radio when they were more compact and dependable. Of course they had no electricity there either but he had a windcharger generator with blades that were turned by wind charging a storage battery that powered the radio. Beth and I used to walk down to King's on certain nights to hear Major Bowes Amateur Hour telling us to call Murryhill 8-9933 and other selected programs. The Kings never complained. We'd lay on the floor and imaginations were set in play.

Dad bought the new Model T Ford in 1927, but years and time had taken its toll and about the time I became 16 years old, he purchased a used Overland Whippet 2 door car. This was his first experience with a gear shift transmission and the problems were multitude. There were minor accidents and excuses each time. The one most remembered was on a morning we were going to visit Owen Elston who lived North of

Ashley. Mom gathered us all out in the front yard to wait there in safety until Dad backed out and got straightened out to go out into the road. We all stood waiting. We heard the engine start, then the gears grind into mesh and out the car came toward us too rapid indeed. As it approached, we just stood and stared, scared to death. Dad gave a quick turn on the wheel; that car backed into the corner of the house with a vengeance. The down spout there was flat, pieces of brick flew, the bumper crashed and the car sat there with wheels spinning and jumping trying to push the wall in but it failed as Dad shut off the engine and figured out the trouble, then started it again. We kids climbed in the back seat frightened to death. Mom and the baby got in front with Dad. He said, "It wouldn't have happened if you had all shut up." We all looked at each other. We were so scared, we held our breath, not one of us had said a word nor did we for some time, then quietly.

I hated that car!!! It had so many problems and wasn't dependable. You never knew if it would start or not. Sometimes it would and again you had to crank it. I drove it to Ashley one cold winter night. Mom and all of us except Pop went to the P.T.A. meeting in the town hall. Because of the car's starting problem, I parked it down by Lepley's garage and we walked up to the hall. I thought if I had to crank it, no one would see me there. About 10 or 10:30 p.m., we were all in the car and I was preparing to start the engine. I set the throttle on the steering wheel, put the shift lever in neutral, pulled out the choke, pushed down the clutch to lessen the load on the battery, held my breath and pressed the starter. Well, it cranked the engine but wouldn't start. I feared I would quickly deplete the little 6 volt supply so I quit trying in order to save the battery for ignition. I tipped the driver's seat forward and dug out the crank. Other cars had now left so there weren't any spectators. I was glad for that! I proceeded to insert the crank, locked it into place, started around with it; the engine caught, the car lunged at me, I jumped clear and the car crossed the narrow sidewalk into the building. The big doors flew open and a chunk of brick flew out also. It was a mess for me. Wheels spinning there is all that saved me by

giving me time to jump out from between that bumper and the brick wall of the building. There was no dome lite and the front seats were individual and apparently, when I tipped the individual front seat forward in the dark, the seat pushed the long gear shift lever in forward gear. As the starter had made some turns of the engine, fuel had been drawn into each cylinder. Now relieved of cranking a cold motor, the battery gave a healthy spark to start with the first lift of the crank. I escaped without injury at the moment. We woke Dad when we got home and told him Mr. Lepley had to come down and secure the doors and there had been a limited amount of damage done. The next day was Saturday and first thing, Hubert and I and Dad went to Lepley's garage. Guy assured Dad the piece of brick made no difference and the doors were not hurt and he would replace the lock someday soon. Dad said, "Get over to the hardware and get a new lock." I had \$7.00 in a savings which I had with me. They wanted \$4.64 for a new lock. Hubert and I drove to Hudson Hardware to see the price; same lock, same price. "Well", I said, "Dad would want me to get it at Ashley." We came down the hill in Hudson to cross the railroad track. The road was now thawing on the coverage of ice. A train whistled from the west, the engineer waving his arms from the cab. I tried to stop sliding to meet the train but noticed a thawed area along side the tracks from the trains. I turned east with the train and the car stopped heading east. We never moved until the last car passed, expecting a step or something to hit us. We were so close -- and we conveniently forgot to tell Pop!

In the Spring of 1934 Pop and Earl Forrest were returning from Ft. Wayne. For some reason Frank Albright was ahead. He stopped in the road, I supposed for urinary problems, but Dad ran right straight into Albright's car smashing the front of the Whippet quite substantially. It was three weeks 'till graduation with all related activities. I was sick of that car anyhow, but now, I realized we had *no car at all*!! Ebon Albright, Frank's son, said, "I don't know why Dad stopped in front of your Pop and didn't pull off the road." He said he would help me repair the car. Well, it was a job to straighten the hood, repair the radiator, lights and the

front fenders were all screwed up. We took the bumper irons up to C.G. Immel for straightening. They were spring steel and he should have made new ones. What a time we had fitting bolts! First time I drove it, the irons broke, the bumper fell off and I ran over it, girlfriend in the car, 18 years old. After I took her home, I went back and picked up the bumper. I hated that darn car but the engine was running good. I was going near 50 mph and all at once it went into a shimmy. The front end shook so violently the hood flew off into the ditch and I had my hands full just staying between the ditches --more work to come!

Dad was a hard worker and a good provider, I'll always say that. He liked to fish and was good at it. He could catch fish almost everytime. Sometimes more or less but he always got some. The established limit of 25 bluegill per person made it more likely I could go along. I did often. We would leave around 4 a.m. and drive to Golden Lake and load the boat in the gray dark. Pop would row that boat clear to Cranetown before daylight. One day it rained and we didn't leave 'till 10 a.m. He had rowed the boat less than 1/4 mile when I asked him what was that roll of fence doing down there in the lake. "Roll of fence!", he said, "Where? Just show me where it is." I was in the back of the boat, he rowed by pushing me backward 'till I saw it over to our side. He raised it up. It was a trap and we had all kinds of fish in the boat quickly, bluegill, sunfish, several John Demon, some catfish; once we got them all in our sack, it was a haul. Pop had me hold onto the roll of fence low in the water until he rowed the boat to a spot he selected. We checked there again, but in a few days it was gone. He said someone had seen us empty the trap and watched us move it. Now and then Mom and I would find a tub or dishpan full of fish to clean, always in the morning. I always thought they were netted but never saw the net.

As Mom had first married Roy Stomm and had been close to that large family, we would often ask Pop if we could go to visit them. We kids were always pleased when that trip came to pass. First off, they lived among the biggest hills of Fairfield township back a lane off the little gravel road and from the house you could see far and wide. Below the hill to

the East was a strange lift device, a faithful worker, called a RAM. As the spring water entered a chamber, it compressed air and was driven upwards thru a pipe to the house supplying good cold water. It was a mystery to me. Perhaps the most fun was upstairs in that big, big house. While the folks were busy downstairs visiting, they let us play a hand cranked Victrola upstairs. My favorites were the "Uncle Josh" records. We each would sort from stacks of recordings those we liked and we took turns cranking and replacing choices.

Mom especially enjoyed Mary Stomm, a hard working woman who Mom appreciated as they had much in common. The men folk were hard working farmers and Dad was the last one to say it was time to go home and do chores. We always enjoyed the day at Dan and Mary Stomm's.

When Dad traded the used tractor for a new model, Mr. Shoemaker, the dealer at Waterloo, encouraged him to take delivery with rubber tires all around. Dad could no way consider rubber tires on the rear drive wheels. He told "Shoey", as he was called, the tractor would not pull itself up our clay hills when wet, let alone pulling the plow. So when the final deal was made, the new tractor came with rubber tires in front and worm gear steering control with a 4 speed transmission. There were refinements here and there. The tires in front were great! It was nice to have 4 work speeds also, but the enclosed steering gear was the best of all. The old tractor with straight cut gears linking steering wheel to front wheels transfered every stone and bump directly to the driver. At nite, one had bruised wrists and elbows time and again. Now and then you stopped to hold an injured thumb or elbow that went numb after the steel spoke spun around from hitting a stone. We built a nice hard wood platform on the drawbar area that served many purposes. It was great for passengers and piling sacks of grain or fertilizer or whatever.

I remember one time I was plowing for wheat in August some distance from home. Pop had rented ground on the Metzler place. Hubert went along that day and the new tractor drove so easy he often drove it. We were plowing. The ground was hard and dry but turning over quite well. Hubert was

small but could steer well but it was difficult for him to reach the controls. Hubert was driving straight down the furrow going in 3rd gear. I was standing on the platform behind him. I was facing backward with eye on the plow to keep a constant watch on depth and uniformity. The Little Genius no. 8 plow had three controls for the operator to maintain uniformity. There was a rather short and more distant lever that required release and reset only occasionally for the inside or furrow shear. There was, however, a long heavy steel lever reaching up near the tractor seat that would lift or lower the plow beams as desired. Plowing in the field with a big hill and also moving thru a mucky lome soil in a low ground made frequent use of this lever. In normal work conditions, it came to about the 10 o'clock position for easy reach by the tractor operator. Now with Hubert driving, I stood on the platform facing the plow a slight bit to the side of this lever. Suddenly there was an explosion. The plow went up in the air but remained attached to the tractor. Hubert stopped as quick as he could reach the clutch. As the tractor entered the low ground and easily turning the soil, it picked up a little speed. The forward mounted plow shear run headlong into a railroad timber buried there. The back of the plow flew high in the air driving the control handle down beside me with such tremendous force the heavy lever was bent edgewise leaving it "moon-shaped". The speed and weight of the tractor drove the plow shear into the hard railroad tie and the whole thing flew out on top of the ground. If I had remained directly in line with the handle, I am sure I would have sustained serious injury or been killed. We think the rail tie remained from someone previously who used it to get a tractor out of the low spot. Anyhow, if this lever had driven into my skull, as it was driven into the platform, --- well, there's no question as to possibilities.

One time while pulling a rotary hoe, a cultivating tool made up of many curved tines, I was working near the house when Roger T. and Hugh Myers came walking out to see me. Roger wanted to drive the new tractor so I told him we had that little patch around the two pear trees to go slow and go over it a couple times as it needed cultivation. Now our clay ground could get

hard after a rain and hot sun. Roger went over it once and made little impression so when he stopped, I said, "Hugh and I will stand on the rotary. Go slow over it again and perhaps it will cut thru." As Roger came near the pear tree, I jumped off to avoid the limb. Hugh remained on, put out his hands to deflect the limb, lost his balance and fell into the hoe with one leg going under two tines cutting the calf muscle of his leg. It looked terrible. We lifted the machine off and took him to Waterloo to the doctor. The doctor took one look and prepared to treat him with a small pencil-like probe with cotton. The cotton was soaked with, of all things, rubbing alcohol. It hurt something fierce as he slowly inserted the probe and alcohol into each of the two puncture holes. Hugh recovered soon and had a sore leg for only a short time and had no further problems.

As tractors were new in our community, there were many accidents. A number of farmers were killed over the years and also many were injured. Some were so sad as a couple young farmers left a young wife and children at each house. One upset the tractor and was crushed and the other the tractor went through the barn floor killing him instantly with big timbers breaking under the weight of the tractor.

It seems those of us who operated tractors day and nite learned to respect the potential for injury after a time; but one machine that fooled so many men was the savage, crushing, tearing rolls of the corn picker. The heavy chains and power needed to turn the rolls at high speed to jerk ears of corn from the stalks and to pull all husks from the ear had the capability of crushing human flesh with ease. Men working against time and weather would be in a hurry to remove the plugged stalks from the rolls. The gathering chains that ran in front of the rolls had long steel fingers to pick up downed corn and upright the stalks thrusting them into the spinning rolls. Often to clear the machine, men got too close and a gathering chain would grasp a pant leg and draw the leg into the crushing snapping rolls. Sometimes hands and arms were amputated as one reached too close or stooped over the open uncovered power take off shaft, a pant leg caught in a universal joint would strip a man of his clothes instantly if he was lucky, if

not, he sustained great injury to bones, flesh and loss of blood. Often on one nearby meant much time would elapse before he was found.

George Dilley was a young man who lived just the first farm east of us about a half mile and he and his young wife, Wilda (Blue) Dilley were industrious young farmers with small children when they purchased the Collins' farm. George had an old Fordson tractor that was most temperamental to start and operate. I was discing in a field for George driving the Fordson. He was working a used Farmall he had just purchased. I looked over where he was and saw his tractor stuck, buried deep in loose dirt. I went over there to see if I could help. He had already carried a couple of rails from a nearby fence to push under the wheels for lugs to grab to, but he was wrapping a chain around one rail locking it to the right rear wheel. He climbed onto the seat and in low gear he let the clutch out slowly and the tractor lifted ever so little. I expected to insert the free rail when he gave the signal. Somehow, the dirt loosened and the tractor wheel turned quickly, rail and all came up over his back. He ducked in time and the rail cleared him completely but descended upon the tractor hood with a vengeance. The rail was a good, heavy one he'd selected; it drove the hood down, bent the throttle and spark controls, bent the over-the-top steering shaft and drove the hood down into the tappet valve cover of the engine; a close call indeed!

George was a good neighbor and I enjoyed the opportunity to work for him. He was young, in a hurry yes, impetuous, a very hard worker, his thinking and talking was up to date. He bought the first hammermill in our community to grind cow feed and such. He came over to get me and kept the surprise until we drove in at the barn. There sat a new red hammer mill from Sears. The tractor was already belted up and all set to go. He started up and we thrilled at the prospect of grinding whatever--whenever. He said, "Do you want to shovel in or hang sacks?" I said, "I better shovel 'til I see how you hang sacks." He had oats and ear corn already mixed in a pile on the barn floor beside the grinder. As I remember, we ground about three sacks and were grinning at each other when all heck broke loose! The mill sounded like thunder, jumped up and

down lifting the floor planks and dust like you never saw. He ran for the tractor on his side of the belt, me on the other. We shut down as quickly as possible. The mill was smoking hot. We got so we could see into it. The screen was all bent and hot iron balls laid in the bottom. We found some windmill angle irons in the feed. How it got there, I can't say, but I had shoveled some into the high speed hammers and they drove the stuff thru the screen.

George devised a series of ropes to control clutch and steering wheel so that he could operate his tractor from the grain binder seat. He would sit back there and regulate and watch the binder and drive the tractor also. George and Wilda had a large family, a good family to be sure. He worked hard day and nite and yet had time for church and to help someone. They were an inspiration to all in our community.

It was hard work, but for us boys it was fun too. One time we were buzzing wood on Earl Forrest's in the morning. We were back right near the end of their lane working, when we sighted a rabbit in the brush. We paused long enough to catch it and just got started again when we saw someone coming back the lane. Clark said, "That's Don. He's bringing a neighbor -- they are going rabbit hunting." Clark and Glenn took the dead rabbit over to a brush pile, set it down sort of life-like, then took a stick and put it up under it's chin so it held it's head erect, laid twigs over it a bit and we were back to work. When Don and two friends arrived, they went to meet them. They told Don they had seen a rabbit in a brush nearby. They then directed him to the general area and came back to work so they wouldn't scare it. Don loaded his gun, walked around cautiously and soon saw it. He fired once, missed and explained to his friend that he was just going to shoot the nose off and have clean meat. Fired twice, said some strange words, got up a bit closer and shot very carefully a third time. Nothing happened. With gun in one hand, he investigated only to find a cold carcas filled with buck shot and a group of men and boys laughing. Don's face matched his red hair for a time. Then the threats flew!!!

While we boys were expected to work, the men would tolerate a joke and fun now and then and took part in some themselves.

One thing the men would not permit was any horse-play near the running saw. It was a terrific potential and we worked within inches without protection of guards and restraints.

The old windmill was not dependable day after day to pump water and when it needed repair, Dad tore it down. He built a large room on the back of the house, poured concrete over the entire floor and proceeded to equip it with power. The power was a 1 1/2 hp IHC one cylinder engine. He was quite innovative and installed a line shaft near the ceiling with several wooden pulleys. By installing several belts from this shaft, we could operate a "pump jack" to bring up water as needed. We could engage the belt that drove the washer. That was great washing clothes for a big family was always a Monday morning thing. Mom never got all ready early like some. In fact, Mom could not hear well, but we kids could hear the faithful Maytag motor running Monday morning early. It was Myrtle Forrest already washing when Mom and I would walk to the barn to do chores. About 9 or 10 a.m. Pop would come up and start the engine. If it stopped, Mom waited until noon to finish. She was so patient. I often wondered how it all got done. Water had to be heated in a big copper boiler on washday. The fire in the range required replacing wood every few minutes, the reservoir too was full and sometimes additional containers were used. If the engine should stop in a half hour, you can imagine the trouble. All our clothes were hung out on four long clothes lines regardless of weather. In decent weather that worked well but in cold, freezing weather, it was so much work. Overalls, bedding, underwear, dresses froze solid and were carried inside to thaw out and dry. She was carefull not to bend those or the fabric would often break. One could stand the underwear against the wall and there they would stand rigid. One could carry only a few things at a time which required many trips.

Pop set a small grinder behind the engine and we could use a short belt from it to the engine to grind cornmeal for mush. We would select good ears of corn, shell and blow out the trash and grind as we needed for pancakes, much and milk and of course fried mush. That was the best. It took so much

time to fry mush for all of us, but we enjoyed that now and then. Cut cakes 3/8" thick then fried golden brown--a delicacy it was!

We made our own butter, of course. Everyone did that and we knew no different. Cream was skimmed from the milk after setting as it accumulated 'till needed then poured into a hand cranked churn. There, the wood paddles would stir and mix until the butterfat joined hands to become solids and the liquid then was poured off. The curds then had to be worked by hand until a thick solid mass was formed. The butter could then be made in various shapes and wooden molds were employed by some to result in flower or leaf designs on the top of the finished product. I recall one time when Mom ran out of butter on the table and it took lots of it, as it was used generously. She just brought a big bowl of it from the pantry and set it in the center of the table. It got passed around and when the hired man received it, he took the spoon, cut it half in two, pulled it out of the bowl onto his plate saying, "Oh, more mush!" We all laughed. There was half of Mom's butter on Jay Mead's plate!!

Our regular morning breakfast was pancakes and sausage, smoked sausage at that. For years the pancakes were buckwheat that had to be prepared the nite before and placed in the warming oven overnite. The wood range was a Home Comfort. It was a great stove. Above the range top was a large warming oven. On either side of the hot smoke pipe were cabinets with door closures where things were kept warm. There was a large reservoir at one end for a hot water supply to wash dishes, hands, etc. Among my first tasks with responsibilities were these two: Keep the wood box full for Mom and the reservoir full of water. Dad kept a good supply of wood in the back yard, with ranks and ranks of dry wood. It was the best. He would cut beech, maple, ash and all such hard wood well ahead of need ranked behind the house. Rain and snow did little harm to it. My job was to be sure the woodbox on the back porch was full, especially at nite before bed time. Soon after getting that job, feeding the chickens came next. Then I had chores, these were morning and evening tasks. One thing you learn about chores on the farm,

there is **NO**, I mean **NO** reason for not doing them. You do 'em, rain, sleet, deep snow, and we had deep deep snowstorms, company, illness, tiredness, injury, nothing was to be considered. Those things had to be done and they were your job so "do 'em!"

It was lack of fulfillment of one of these simple chores that led my dad to give me one of the few "bawling outs", as we called them. I had it coming. I was out in the corn crib shelling corn from the cobs into a pail to feed the chickens. I had to shell a full bucketful and divide it between both hen houses. The open slats of the crib had let a lot of snow blow in on the corn and as I was shelling, my hands got cold; gloves were wet and the wind came thru that day like mad. I quit shelling at about half the required amount and went to feed the chickens. I divided the half pail of shelled corn to each and ran back in the house. I just got snuggled up by the warm stove when Dad came in after me. That never happened again! Pop had a way of getting the message across in such a way you didn't forget it--it lasted!!

Grandma had a different method. She had little things she wanted me to do. They were not difficult, but they made some conflicts with others. Dad got top priority with me; his orders went to the top. Now Grandma couldn't hear so she had no way to know of any other orders handed down. Mom tried to hand down some but they often were the last done at our house. Well, if Grandma had told me to trim a bush or pull weeds from a flower bed or whatever, and she checked later only to find I had ignored her, she would not say a word. I never knew when she was about to attack. She would walk up to me as usual as could be, take her thumb and second finger of one hand and close the sharp fingernails into the lobe of an ear and slowly walk to the "undone" location and point with the remaining hand and never release the pressure on the ear. It was a means of saving her voice and yet while she could not carry on conversation, being so deaf as she was, she had her way of getting her wishes known. She was very good to me and I like Grandma. She would get me things now and then and on occasion she would give me a nickle or a penny without a word, just out of the clear sky she would do that. The best thing I ever did for Grandma was help her

find her glasses. She would never tell us she couldn't find her glasses until she became so frustrated she would quietly look around, high and low, and as a last resort, she would ask for help. Where? They were never mislaid; they were on her head raised above sight. When we all went someplace, I found myself helping Grandma. Mom and Dad had children to look after. I was able and Grandma counted on me. She tried to help with my Sunday School training in several ways. When I was quite small I slept with Grandma and after she would say her good nite prayers she would teach me the Lord's prayer. She would say three words at a time. I was told in later years by some who listened outside the room, I *did not always* repeat the exact words, I made up substitutes. Poor Grandma was deaf and never knew.

Once a year we would travel to Pleasant Lake town to purchase family shoes. This came when Dad would sell a load of hogs. To outfit us all could get to cost \$30 for everything, boots and all. Once we drove up there, which was a trip in itself, Mom and Dad got out more quickly and with kids alongside and being carried, we were going down the sidewalk ahead of Grandma. Now Grandma always wore black or dark green dresses. They were ankle length. Suddenly as we walked along on the sidewalk getting near the Ransburg store, her underskirt straps broke and the long slip came down around her ankles. We had to stop and step out of the slip, which was not an easy task for her, gather it up all in the view of passers-by!! The rest of the family went on into the store and never knew of it until I told them. The big store, operated by the Ransburg Brothers, was an interesting place. It was long and narrow. The ceilings were very high and shoes in boxes filled shelves floor to ceiling. About 2 feet from the walls was a steel track and ladders. The ladders rolled on these tracks the full length of the store guided at the top by similar support. It was a substantial way to utilize the high walls and shelves. We would try on shoes. When we found a pair that fit, Dad would get the next larger size. The same way with boots to do chores-the larger ones.

While Mom made many clothes for the girls, and neighbors and relatives exchanged

all kinds of items before school began each year. Later, when I got big enough to do a days work, Pop would buy overalls for me and him at the J.C. Penney store at Auburn. The "Pay Day" were \$1.79 and the Oshkosh best were \$1.98. In spite of the cost, my dad got the Oshkosh. He thought it paid to get the better quality. He would give the clerk the money and she would reach above her head at her station and unscrew a little cup hanging from a wire. After the money and purchase slip were well secured in the cup, she would pull a rope. She would yank down hard and this thrust the little cup, which hung on wheels, to go speeding along the wire the length of the store to where a cashier was waiting. If the cashier was busy, you waited patiently until it became your turn; then she received the sales slip, counted the money, marked it OK and replaced the change and approval slip for delivery. She then pulled the thrust cord which sent the little car and cup in return to the clerk. She, by then, had your purchase wrapped.

I think now, as I look back over my time here having enjoyed the gift of life well over 70 years, to remember living more than one third of the time our country came into existence, a privilege it was. Just to be able to recall events of early childhood is yet a mystery to mankind, a gift of great value that we take for granted along with so many. I believe I have lived in the greatest of times, for no one on the face of this earth has seen the changes that have come to pass that compare to these years. In all recorded time has there been the opportunities, the rapid inventions, the freedoms, the choices given to one generation and much of this came to us from earlier dedication - work - risk - planning and deep founded respect for God's creation and purpose. I think I have lived in the greatest of years, an age of excitement and change. The 70 years before were extremely hard and difficult with danger and great uncertainty, the 70 just ahead hold equally great uncertainty for this country will pay a great price for the decay of standards and responsibility.

There was a time of testing of men's souls that I did witness. While I personally did not suffer as did so many millions, I did see it and I did feel it around me like smoke from a muck fire.

A Brother's Trust

I was somewhat older when Hubert was a little tyke and he trusted me whatever we did. Big brother was old enough to know better, but didn't and one winter day, this trust nearly cost him his life.

Pop was hitching the team to the bobsled bunks to go to the woods to get a load of logs. We climbed on and rode to the woods in snow perhaps 8" - 12" deep. Pop drove along side the log and stopped in position to load when he noticed Forrest Miller across the fence cutting wood in his woods. Pop told us to stay put and watch the team as he wanted to go over and see Forrest.

I grew impatient waiting and told Hubert that I knew how to load logs and we would go ahead and put that log on the sled and surprise Pop. I set the skids in place; the two ends near the log and the opposite end on each bunk to set up a ramp to roll the log up on the sled. I hooked the chain to each bunk and worked it under the log with some difficulty, but I did it. Then I unhitched the horses and positioned them on the opposite side of the sled, with the long chain up over the log and over the sled to pin it into the doubletree for a pull up the ramp.

The job seemed to be going well and it would be simple to step the team forward and watch the log roll up the skids and drop onto the bunks and be loaded. Boy, would Dad be surprised. Well, ~~we~~ we were surprised!

Now, here's where I reveal how dumb I was:

I thought maybe the log dropping off the end of the skids onto the sled bunks could roll on across the bolsters and off the other side, so to prevent that, I told Hubert to "stand on that side with a cant hook and stop it if it rolls off." He stood there like a little man with the big cant hook ready -- ready to be smashed to a pancake! The team stepped ahead slowly and the log rolled up the skids as expected but as it dropped off the ends of the skids, it began to roll, not fast, but being big and heavy it rolled across the sled bunks to take Hubert and cant hook to the ground flat as a fritter. The log fell across his middle leaving his head and shoulders outside but he couldn't yell, he couldn't move and he couldn't breathe. I must have turned pure white. The

log had dropped and pinned him flat near the middle of the sled and log.

I grasped on the end of the log but couldn't lift it. I tried with all my might. I knew I had to get it up somehow and must give it another try. I don't know how I could have done it, but I lifted the small end two or three inches, I think, and Hubert wiggled out!

As I look back, I suppose the cant hook may have helped saved his life. It was a tool about five feet long and four inches in diameter in the thickest place with hugh iron hooks on the end to grip the logs when loading or unloading.

Hubert laid on the ground until Dad returned then he got up and walked by himself. I was relieved. Dad could see I had tried to load that log but never knew it had dropped on his son. Hubert was a loyal little guy. He just laid around while we loaded and all the way back to the house. When Dad asked him why he was lying around, he'd just say he "didn't feel good." That was the truth! He didn't feel good for several days and nites. I guess he was made out of rubber in those days and took a lot of hard knocks. That log laid on the bank near our shop and I measured it across the small end was 19" one way and 23" the other and was 12' long. The snow, cant hook and perhaps a depression in the ground all served to help save Hubert but it was a close call indeed.

Now I wonder if that is why he got sick in Venezuela at the age of 65 or was it because I put him in the little wagon and tied a rope around the neck of an untamed calf and let the two of them take a ride kinda like at Cedar Point; a short but exciting ride which was described as "unforgettable!!"?

Dad was a life-long Democrat, a "dyed in the wool" Democrat; a Democrat could make no mistakes because what he did and what he said was for the poor people. Earl Forrest was a staunch Republican and found in those candidates the true dedication to bring good to our country. To hear these two argue their political belief was something. If I had a means to record tapes of those exchanges, there would be a market for them, I know. One habit they shared that I saw was when their candidate did a good thing, they patted his back. When he didn't, they always blamed the earlier administration or the other party. Prosperity was declining in the years preceeding 1929 and alarm was spreading out in the rural and farm areas. I was thirteen years old and everything was fun and I saw nothing wrong. Yes, I read the papers of impending financial shake-ups, but they meant little to me. I think one main reason was that I had little to compare to and little reason for fear as we had good shelter, an abundance of good food, the best, and Mom and Dad represented security in our house. I could lay on the floor and look at the catalogue or read the funnies. Mom would be patching overalls or drying corn, Dad would be bouncing Beth on his knee and smoking his pipe. The Forrest kids came up to play and life was good. Through the summer the papers related financial failures and foreclosures with daily increase until neighbors and friends could talk of nothing else. As Herbert Hoover and F.D.R. wound down their campaigns in the fall of 1929, one began to realize the seriousness of the situation. There were bitter debates and arguments before election time and even more intense immediately afterwards.

In November, election time came. It was evident that many folks, rural and metropolitan, wanted a change and so it was. Mr. Roosevelt was elected and prepared for some drastic measures to be implemented. Some would be with risk and untried before, but times were desperate. Now the newspapers were reporting the fall of prices, corporations closing their doors, bankruptcy and suicide was truly a sobering and startling thing. One need only stop by the public library and pick those daily papers to read accounts of senior vice-presidents and

respected leaders of community banks and such taking their life one way or another.

The term "Hard Times" was coined and became the regular topic of conversation of the adult population. I was not fully aware of the true fear and hardship as was experienced by city families when the father came home at noon saying the job was gone, the business had closed its doors because in town was the electric bill, perhaps water or heat and continuous need for food, taxes and the list grew and grew. I am more familiar with the farm life, however. We had such a modest amount of benefits that the decline was less and came on gradually. The very first day after his oath of office, Mr. Roosevelt closed the banks then reopened them strengthened and assured by the federal government that bank funds were safe. This was a very encouraging fact for all people.

Farm produce value continued to decline to the point of great discouragement, yet there was always the need for money. True, we kids did not feel the pain as did our parents; what we were used to, tables of food and necessities were there but there was no cash for doctor's bills, salt, sugar and items of need that we found no substitute. The farm income dropped to almost nothing, yet there were taxes, the farm taxes, the farm payment, as Pop was paying Grandma then. Farming was exposed to great uncertainties, so dependent upon weather more so then than now. Doing farm work with horses was slow and ground moisture often would disappear in a few days before fields could be worked and thereby lost. Cultivation and harvest were often done by hand with daylight to dark dedication. The farm family had a need for money regardless of food and shelter; there were doctor bills at times for family members, veterinary bills for livestock, dependance on well water was great and sometimes required the services of the "well-man", as we called him, machinery repair, wire for fence, nails, bolts, maintenance items and taxes were also a constant reoccurring thing as was sending a young family to school each fall had its own costs.

Dad would try to catch up the big bills when he had a load of hogs to sell. This was a substantial part of our farm income. When a sow would farrow with her litter of pigs, he

would consider that six months later they would be ready to sell and I suppose he carried with him a general estimate of income which too was so uncertain.

One time when we encountered serious difficulty in the operation, Dad took serious steps indeed. We had five horses, a two and a three horse team. We worked them in that fashion. Queenie, the black western horse with great vitality and dependability, became ill. There is no way I can express the early farming as it depended upon a good horse. It was the very heart of the entire livelihood. The veterinary was called and made repeated trips and expressed grave doubt that Queenie would live. She dies of Esteria, a kidney disease. Now before this, my Dad would never, never show any emotion when he found livestock sick or dead. If a brood sow died, he merely lit his pipe and called the tankage company and it was the same if a cow died and down thru the years these things happened. Not often, as I remember, but now and then they did. He would always say the same thing, Well, as long as it stays in the barn we won't say anything." But this time was a shock and a threat to our spring work coming up any day now. The seriousness at that time became evident to me as I came around the corner of the barn and found Dad and Mom embraced, standing outside the horse stable door. I stepped inside where I was and remained quiet and Mom tried to reassure Dad it would be all right. They stood there some time and while I never saw him cry, I saw him take out his "hancercher", he called it, and blew his nose as he pushed her away. It was a moment I will never forget and it told me how important it all was. We had no money laid back for such as spring took heavy toll in seeds and fertilizer expense.

Pop, along with some other neighbors, used to purchase some horses on these occasions of a man named Dale Fanning from near Golden Lake. He would go out west and select these horses and have them shipped to his farm in Steuben County. He had many acres and the horses were allowed to roam loose until sold. He had help in rounding up the horses and breaking them for use. There was more risk in the purchase of a horse here however, Mr. Fanning would take a horse back and return the money if there was

disappointment. He had a good reputation of honesty, to say nothing of a good private lake on his property that was a popular place to fish.

Farmers in need would prefer to attend a farm sale, of which there were many, and compete in the auction to purchase a matched and proven team or even a single horse, however the cost was greater. Whichever the source of replacements, money was needed.

This time Pop borrowed \$200 from the Ashley bank for six months. The six month term in the fall with greater likelihood of repayment. At that time, Pop could not repay the \$200 but could pay the interest charged. He choose to borrow the \$200 from the Waterloo bank and with the money on hand, he paid the Ashley bank. There was no way the spring note of \$200 could be met so he got the money at Auburn to pay it off and deferred actual payment for the third time.

The "hard times" which I refer to lasted for quite some years, thru the early 1930's as I recall. We were never threatened by loss of food or clothing or shelter; these things we kids took for granted. We didn't consider them anything, we always had them from birth and knew only mealtime with a table well laden with all the garden produce. Fruits and vegetables were counted by the 100 quarts. I made many trips to the basement where Mom would send me often for a particular item or tell me to bring up a jar of fruit of my choice. There were long racks of shelves in our basement near the stairway that held jars of fruit such as peaches, pears, plums, mulberries, raspberries, blackberries, apricots, elderberries and apples to name a few and the garden list was even longer, yet I think while Mom and Grandma worked all summer canning and preserving huge amounts of food for the long winter months, the warm house all added together gave us such security we did not expect money too. We had everything we had need for. I think if one family had some money and bought things, we would have known more the fear of hard times but at church or school we did not run into kids who had any money. We didn't even talk of the lack of money. We just may have had more fun during that time because of the simple fact there was no money. This way, it was

the same for everyone . At school we got to mingle with kids from all around our area and those that came from big farms or small, there was no distinction, no competition, no difference. It was the same as in summer where we were more confined to immediate neighbors. In that respect, we were so fortunate. We had the best, the Forrests, and they were marvels at coming up with real good fun and money was never mentioned. That was something for parents, not us!

Our family was no different from the others. The popular practice was to wear "hand-me-downs". Now anyone my age can remember that. Overalls, as we called them, were handed down from older to younger and girls dresses the same. They were all put away for someone to use later, they did, they always did. If not to a sister, then a cousin or neighbor too exchanged. When worn out, the good parts were saved and packed away to be used solely for patching. Mom would sit by the yellow old kerosene lamp nite after nite and patch socks with a darning needle and a wooden cone supporting the sock. Patching men's overalls was a regular thing to replace with fresh material on a knee or hip pocket.

In as much as Aunt Irma and Uncle Carey were frequent company at our house, I became the beneficiary to items of clothing. Aunt Irma had four children: Harold, of Niles, Michigan, Raymond of Newport News, Virginia and Gladys of South Bend, Indiana. Harold and Raymond were older than I. Uncle Carey had steady work on the railroad or the big cement plant in Stroh, Indiana, thus the children were kept in clothes as they grew,--they out-grew. The boys clothes were handed down to me and many were real good and saw me thru school. Only one pair of pants I learned to dislike, those were a dark blue navy pant with two features that caused me problems. Now Raymond went to the Navy while I was in school. He seemed to adjust to those long rows of buttons and I'll bet there were more than twenty each time you put them on. He looked nice in them, I looked like a clod. There was a row of buttons at the upper thigh on each side and completely across the waist, also the flare of the bell bottoms when you ran or played basketball in the school yard, well, they were a handicap. They were good, they were

warm and they never, never wore out--you had to outgrow 'em and I did! I never held it in my heart to appreciate 'em as I should have.

We always carried our lunches to school, but didn't always take time to eat them. The noon hour was the time for running rough and tumble and we took advantage of every minute.

While children of the farming community were aware of "hard times" it was the parents who suffered. Farm crops, as I've mentioned before, were subject to the uncertainties of the weather and required mostly hand work to harvest in the fall, only to find little or no market. Now a bin of wheat after a year or preparation from production to harvest and into storage in the grainry should be security but it was not. A field of wheat in those days meant little. The yield of bushels per acre was low, twenty to twenty-six bushel per acre and then try to sell and you found a market bringing perhaps 66¢ per bushel. One time Pop and I sacked up a load of oats from the grain bin. This was unusual to sell oats and I presume there must have been a need. We loaded the wagon with these sacks of oats. We thought we put two bushel in each sack, but there were top quality and weighed near two and a half bushel to the sack. Pop got 9¢ a bushel. He knew the price because on occassion when he didn't have money to pay the feed grinding bill, he would include some extra bags to sell. To sell ten bushel would bring a total of 90¢. We may have taken in twenty to thirty bushel that day.

One time during this period Pop and I were in Hudson at Frank Strock's grain elevator. It sat on the south side of the Wabash tracks and was quite a larg facility for that day. It was a popular place for men to gather; to sell their grain; to catch up on the trends and just to visit. Electricity would come to the farm and with it radio and there would be current news and market trends, but at this time groups would enjoy getting together to exchange information.

The time was the week before Christmas and there was no school that day. I got to go along with Pop to Strock's elevator. The owner-operator was Frank Strock who was a very well respected man in the community. He tried to be fair and make a reasonable

profit, took risks and I'm sure it was not easy. He was a generous person by nature and had a following and support among the farmers. Many would seek his advice before planting time and he would share his experience and forecast of future. Well, this day there were perhaps four or five men in the warm office talking with Mr. Strock when Pop and I came in. The little office had limited room and all were standing. The men pointed out a team and wagon turning in the drive and headed toward the office and scales. Now this wagon was a wagon box and it had sides extended up to add to the capacity. As the driver approached, one could see the wagon was loaded with ear corn. The trend then was toward yellow corn rather than the white that was so common and had somewhat smaller ears and not as uniform. The open polinated corn was less in many ways as compared to the hybrids introduced later, but a load of yellow corn "hand husk" meant not a leaf or husk in the wagon load. Each ear is shucked by hand and clean, it makes an impressive sight. The wagon had come from quite a distance, as we would learn later, and with wooden wheels and steel tires shook this load greatly every mile of frozen gravel road. In spite of this treatment, the load still showed the contents rounded above the top box after miles of shakedown. These top boxes had a chain in the center to hook the two sides together across the box that lent support to each other. The man drove up near the office, climbed down and prepared to enter. Mr Strock looked grim and was talking to himself like, "Now what", or such. The man entered and before he took off coat or gloves, he moved toward the stove and said, "Frank, I want to talk to you." The men all moved back and gave him close audience with Frank as he indicated business. He made his wants known by saying, "Frank, I want to sell you this load of corn." It was quiet for a moment or two then Frank turned away from the window and looked at the man and said, "I'm not buying any more corn, I can't. I don't have any more room." The man said, "Frank, I have to sell this load of corn, I gotta sell it." Frank said, "I can't buy it, look out there." He turned back and pointed out the window. "My cribs are all full, I can't sell an ear of corn. I've got corn piled out there in the dump space.

The birds and rats are into it. I can't handle it. I can't buy it. I can't sell it and I've just got no more room." The man pleaded with him and said these words, "I've got to raise some money for Christmas, I just gotta." Frank said, "How much do you have to have for that load?" The man said, "I've got to raise \$5. Frank said, "I'll give you \$5. Unload it by the door and I'll run it thru this stove for heat." We all stood around rather quiet and watched him unload. Frank filled the coal bucket with the corn and dumped it into a dying fire. The man spoke with a German accent and while I don't think Pop knew him, he said he came from St. Michael's church area. The incident tells you something of the time of frustration for farmers.

There was a family I knew where the father had lost his job and faced great hardship. Mr. and Mrs. Irwin had two small boys. A neighbor, not far away developed this practice: each morning after milking the cows, he would take a gallon of milk over to the Irwin's across the road and set it on their back step. Mrs. Irwin said she used it in every way she knew how and doesn't know to this day how they would have survived without the 4 quarts of milk daily. Dad tried to feed our grain into livestock and chickens. There remained a weak and uncertain market for milk, meat and eggs.

For a number of years, the "huckster" would come by a certain day each week with a big old green box with small doors in the sides and back he would open to sell sugar, salt, soda, can rubbers, buckwheat flour, mustard, seasonings and a long list of items for kitchen use. On the corner of the big box was a hook to support a scales so he could buy chickens, which he did. Mom would sell him whatever eggs we had left over each week and sometimes a chicken or two. The live chickens went into a crate upon top of the huckster wagon. He went door to door and became a real part of rural life. Sometimes Mom would get the things she needed and spare some pennies for candy. Peppermint sticks seemed the most for the money and made it a good day no matter what else happened.

Rainy days Dad seemed to have plenty of work in the shop. He had all kinds of tools he bought at farm auctions. I used to watch him half-sole our shoes. He had the post and lasts

to fit small, medium, ladies, boys and mens shoes. He purchased the leather in quite a large sheet and cut soles from it to fit our shoes. A selection of little nails were used to secured it to the shoe. Sometimes they came thru around the edges and tore a sock. He would purchase rubber heels and replace those also. Later, one could buy a thin rubber sole along with glue to bond them to your shoe. Sometimes they came off if they got wet too often. They did not last like good leather. Pop never locked the shop and it was not unusual to see someone working in there repairing family shoes or machinery or washing machines or whatever. Pop never would go to see who it was unless he just wanted to visit. He didn't care who was out there.

When I became a little more able to help with chores and field work, Dad used to go fishing up in Michigan at a lake in Allegan county. He brought home fish all right, but also some stories of incidents. Now and then someone would go along and I would get details from them. Otis Stoy was one who went several times. His brother, Olis, could never take time from their farm work but Otis had week-ends off. Dad always took along some wine or home brew and this accounted for some experiences. One nite when Otis and Dad were sleeping in the little woods near the lake at their campground, Otis woke up hearing a noise. It was dark but he saw Dad standing off to one side. He said, "Charley, -- Charley, you're peeing in your shoes!!!" "Just whose shoes are they?", he answered.

While fishing alone one afternoon with poor luck indeed, trying here and there, now and then getting some small ones only, Dad gave up and decided to go in and rest a while and then try again in the evening. When he rowed the boat up on shore, there was a game warden to meet him. He took one look in the boat and saw these little underage and underlength fish lying here and there in the bottom of the boat. With his uniform and hat he spoke rather sharply. This got Dad's attention. "What are you doing with these fish? You can't keep 'em that small." "Those ain't my fish", Dad shot back. "Well, they are your fish. They are in your possession - you caught 'em." "I didn't catch 'em. They were in the boat when I came." "Why didn't

you throw 'em out?" "Well, I don't clean the boats around here, I just rent 'em, I don't care about 'em. They aren't mine." The warden had no doubt seen him out there catching 'em but he backed off. The fish weren't biting so they sat around and drank home brew, visited a bit and he gave Dad a key to his own boat, which he carried for a year or two and hever had to rent a boat again up there.

It was about this time a family moved out of Chicago having purchased the Elmer McClish farm just one mile north of us. Now this family had never farmed and had no experience, but the out- doors farm life seemed like the answer. So many strange things happened the next two years it would fill a book by itself. They asked us what the yellow buildings were for that people were all putting up in the barnyards. ---- They were straw stacks! Fred Ellert stopped one day and one was hitched up to a spring drag to prepare seed bed. At the farmyard they took time to pull the levers completely back rotating the spring teeth down to extreme length to the greatest depth, then drove back the lane toward the field with the teeth trying to penetrate the driveway catching and stretching back, then pulling loose, the drag would jump again and again onto the double tree and throw a load on the horses and harness as they went merrily along. Fred had never seen this done before--a first for him!!! They did chores different also. I think they did some chores on week ends, but they didn't milk the cows on Sunday. They were there only a couple of years, too bad--because they could have developed a breed of cattle that could have become popular at that!

They decided to butcher a hog one day. I suppose it was cold weather, I don't recall. They decided they could do it for themselves, so they killed the hog, a necessity yes, but they did that first, then they built a fire to heat water to scald the hair off. Well, the hog proved to heavy to lift. It was a surprise there so when they couldn't get it into a barrel, they *POURED the water over it!* This did little more than make it wet and thaw the ground and make mud. It didn't even warm the hog up because by now the hog was rigid. His legs were so stiff, they could have stood him up to work on him. They wanted the hair off so bad but it was a tough job, they did

shave some off with knives and scrapers but just in spots. They covered the hog with blankets and heated up a new batch of water. No luck, it got cold because the carcass was so cold now. They gave up for that day. The next day they tried a blow torch and burned some hair off, but decided to give up and call Earl Forrest. Earl went up to help the next morning. He said he never saw anything like that. It was different color and didn't resemble anything he'd ever seen. He did help skin the hog and cut up some parts, but the rest they drug out to the woods. Oh, if only I had a recording of Earl telling about it, I could sell it and there would be a market for it, believe me!

Silo filling and later corn shredding were much like threshing. The neighbors got together and helped each other. The men would leave early in the morning and come home after dark as the days were so short. The big steam engine was the source of power to run equipment. The two most essential needs were coal and wood and lots of water. Without water, the engine had to be shut down. That happened from time to time. "Nick" Rowe was a dependable man on the water wagon. He used one of Earl Forrest's teams to pull a wagon and a good sized water tank. Nick would pull up along side a cistern or spring and drop a big hose down and man a hand operated pump to lift water into the tanker. He had a hard job, an important job, but he was toughened to it. He used to lose his temper when pumping hard and the horses would move a step because of flies or bees in those days. The hose came out of the water and the pump would loose prime and he was mad NOW! and the team got a lick'in. I never liked to see him misues the team, but it happened.

One time in the Fall of the year, Dad came up with a scheme to play a dirty trick on Nick. Now the Rowes were a large family-a number of small kids at the time-and lived about a quarter mile east of the church so it was only a short distance from our house. Mrs. Rowe came over from time to time and while we did not have great things, we were very "well off" by their standards. The work "by the day" was not enough to provide needs for such a large family. Mom usually gave Jessie something each time. I remember one time Mom gave her some seed

beans because she wanted to raise her own. Mom gave her some for seed but when Mom asked how they were doing she said they ate 'em. This time Dad asked Nick if he would like to go to Miller's and get some watermellons. Dad told him he had seen the patch and there were many and ripe too. Of course Nick was all for it. Dad said he would have sacks and Nick should come around 9 p.m. Then Dad went to Miller's and told Carl they were coming around 9 o'clock or a little later, he could have some fun it I got a bunch together to welcome them. Well Carl and his boys, Cecil, John, Wayne and they told the Forrest boys and they came and all had their shot guns. Now the patch was in the cornfield south of the Miller's house and it did not show from the road or house because of standing corn but was not farm from the house so as to discourage "help-yourselfers". Well, as they walked up the road Dad said to be very quiet because Carl might hear us and he would get mad *right now*. Nick agreed. They climbed the fence and got to the patch. It was loaded. Dad said, "Let's get to work and get out of here because if Carl hears us, he might kill someone. He's been watching these mellons and I'm telling ya', be darn quiet now." They started to fill their sacks when war broke out. I don't know how many were waiting there. I guess there were more than Dad expected. They knew Nick would run South thru the corn so had positioned themselves to be nearby yelling and shooting above the corn all they could to give an extra incentive for the expected fast get-a-way. Those shotguns were pouring out lead and racket and Nick dropped his sack of mellons and took off running. Of course Dad just stood there and after the barrage, they all had a good laugh. Well, everyone went home saying they had fun but Dad went over to Rowe's to see Nick. There he was at home. His overalls were torn down one pant leg and Jessie was washing blood from his leg that was raked by the barbed wire that caught the pant leg. His face was marked up. Dad wandered in and *couldn't figure how they got ambushed!??* Seems Nick had run South as expected and felt someone was after him so he remained at top speed when he encountered the woven wire fence in the dark, had lost one shoe and his hat. He had no other shoes and would

have to wear boots to work the next day. Well, Dad said, "I told ya' to be quiet. You should have just laid down in the corn like I did. I tell ya' what we can do--they won't be looking for us anymore tonite. Let's go back, will ya'?" I'd like some of those mellons." Jessie said, "NO" and Nick said, "Not by a dam site!"

Taking a bath in the early days was a burden I did not look forward to. At our house it was a Saturday evening ritual that Mom insisted upon. She did her best to have hot water that nite. I was supposed to have the reservoir full. It was a take of 5 gallon capacity at the end of the cook stove. The range was a good one; a Home Comfort by name and was a faithful servant. Mom filled dishpans after supper and set them on the stovetop for more water. We would put in the hot water we had ready then add cold to get more depth until we got to the desired temperature. Now we had a galvanized tub and the water cooled so quickly one had to really hurry. We sat the tub near the stove because the room, of course, was not warm. We took our bath in the kitchen and the rest of the family was in the parlor. You had to snuggle up to the stove because it was so cold in that big kitchen. Well I branded myself one time so quick. As I turned around standing upright in a tub, I rubbed the corner of the range. It had a safety rail all around it and I rubbed the corner. A hot fire all evening had it ready for branding--it did!--took the skin off on my left hip. The tatoo looked like a canoe and it remained for 40 or more years. This happened only once. I stayed a safe distance away after that and froze 'till I could dry and get dressed again. It was no joke for it was an unhandy experience but the folks did the best they could.

A friend to all of us at home was the large friendly, always there, big blackboard. As you would enter the front door, it was on the immediate right. This blackboard was known and used by all comers. Whoever put it there was practical and far seeing. I would guess it was the result of a number of teachers in the early family. We kids used it for games to no end. Not just tic tac toe but all kinds of games year after year up thru high school. We would stand in front with our friends and draw pictures of farmsteads, cars, churches and the like. It was a favorite place to

entertain the company. The 48 inch square was very generous in space so we kids could use the lower and center and Mom could use the top. The ledge at the bottom held chalk and an erasure. These remained and if someone carried off the erasure, they were deported. At the top was the date of the next Ladies Aid and how to dry corn. Sometimes when Earl Forrest was there, he would draw a big bird. I never saw him draw anything else but he would just pick up a piece of chalk, limber his arm a bit as we watched and with smooth flowing lines, he would build a big bird and never erase a mark. We would play games around it to save it as long as we could. One thing, it was a silent watchman. Without fail, it displayed the handwritten message of all those who came by in our absence. The last thing we did as we departed was to write where we were and when we would return. The first thing we did as we returned was to erase our departure message and read any messages left there by a caller. Not many would hunt paper and pencil and the hassle to do so, but they would grasp a chalk and leave a message. It was a major part of the house for company and children and it served as a family newspaper too.

When Dad learned to drive the first car, he took us to the Reinoehl reunion in Michigan at Uncle Vain's house near Schoolcraft. We went up one day and came home the next. It was a great trip. We returned a second or third time years later, but the first trip was one to remember. It was hours long and we saw such different country than ours. Pop was good in those days about taking us visiting. Mom had close friends, Owen Elstons, Voyd Stomm, Dora Rempis, Carl Thompsons. Dad had his sister, Maude Snyder, who Mom enjoyed so much and there was Uncle Jacke Perkins and Cora, Uncle John, the young married couple Earnest and Daisey Pairins. We went those places from time to time. It was Mom's greatest entertainment to visit. She could be so tired from the pressure, the hours, the tremendous house duties with little or nothing to work with but if we were going up to Uncle Gabe Snyders, she would be ready in no time and laugh about it for a week after. It was always the same. Her pleasures were so few that she cherished and retained every minute

of a good visit. It was her time of refreshment.

While Dad was a man of the world more street-wise because of years with the Ginivan Show, as he traveled with Frank Ginivan as a security guard and helped in erecting the big tent and all. He had worked for the railroad 11 years, both in the round house and as a brakeman. He was a substitute rural mail carrier out of Hudson for some time and with great ditching experience throughout Fairfield Township, all these endeavors together with his married life to Silva Bickle, resulted in a well rounded education in a broad range of things. Yet, when he married Mom, he went to work farming and forgot all other engagements devoting time and energy to feeding the growing family.

He had a playful side, in early life at least. This may have diminished as he grew older, for there is evidence of being cross and strict with family members. It was not *always* that way though. He had moments of fun and tricks.

On the morning of July 11 when a birthday had rolled around, he was sitting out on the front porch on the church pew. He had taken one of the old straight-back seats when they were replaced with the more comfortable ones, and cut it in two. He made it in an inverted "L" shape to fit our porch and painted it blue. He was sitting on it and I was sitting on the step and Earl Forrest drove in. At that time the drive came in from the road at the south and came up to the front door then continued out to the road again from the north making it a "U" shaped turn past the porch. Earl drove up from the south so he was on our side. He said, "Good morning, Charley." Dad acknowledged his greeting but said no more. He was just smoking his pipe and I guess thinking his youth and power were now on decline for he was proud of both. He said no more, so Earl had to go on. He said, "Is this your birthday, Charley?" His answer, "Yup." No more said. Earl waited, then he asked, "How old are you, Charley?" Dad took out his pipe, "I was born in '74. How old am I?" "You're 50 years old today", Earl stated. "Yup" is all. Then Earl said, "Are you going to live another 50 years Charley?" "Dunno", he answered, "but I'll

tell you one thing. I'm a darn site stronger starting this one than I was the first!"

During threshing season one noon after dinner, we were all sitting around under shade trees to let our dinner settle and telling stories and such. Someone brought up the fact that John Brand had bought a combine and was trying it out on a field of his wheat just South of Ashley. Well, the men had known of this before as they cut and shocked their wheat. This one field was left standing and standing dead ripe, deteriorating with birds and weather taking a toll, there would be great loss there. It had been discussed among the men several times. They were curious as could be and a load of them decided to drive up and see what was happening. Well, when they got in a car to go, so did all the rest of use one by one we all got to go and see this. It was like the first airplane or T.V. We could hardly wait. When we arrived, it was near the other end of the field moving away from us. The whole bunch of us went out walking the stubble to see the wheat on the ground. We couldn't find any! I'll bet there were 15 or more of us looking. The stubble was deeper than I expected and we decided the wheat was there, we just couldn't see it. The machine was coming toward us now. It was an Allis Chalmers, 5 foot, moving right along and run by a power-take-off from the tractor towing it. The darn thing was cutting, tying, shocking, hauling, threshing and putting the grain in it's hopper all at one time and only one man at that! Everybody had to get a handful of the finished product then we left quickly. There was the admission it saved a lot of work, but what have you got? Some of the men said it will work out west in their weather, but will never work here. Some declared wheat cut this way wouldn't make good flour for it had to be cut and set for a time. Some said you wouldn't be able to plant it. Others said it wouldn't keep unless it goes thru a "sweat" first. You don't have any straw at the barn and wheat will come up next year in whatever you plant next. It was an interesting day. It went on all day among the older fellows.

Dad decided it might work, I think one or two years later, and left a field of wheat stand to be combined. We cut and shocked all the rest of the wheat and oats but this one

field still stood unharvested. He had arranged for Mr. Blue to do it for us. Mr. Blue had a huge I.H.C. combine with a 10 or 12 foot cutter bar. It was a huge thing like a threshing seperator. It carried its cutter bar on the side from field to field. A tractor pulled it, but this machine had a gas engine to run it. Well, Mr. Blue spent a lot of money. He was George Dilley's father-in-law and did custom work such as plowing and such. Now, he took on this new custom job. On each side of the combine were these words--"Once over and it's all over". Well, that summer was a wet one. It rained every few days. We had so much trouble threshing. We would have to wait for the sun to shine then we would tear down the shocks, scatter the bundles and hope we got them threshed before it rained again. It was the worst harvest we'd ever had. Dad kept going to Mr. Blue and he kept saying he'd come out. He had listened to the salesman tell how many acres a day this big animal would do, but he didn't tell him how long it would take to put the header bar on and off and that was a job. They didn't tell him the soft ground wouldn't support the weight of the machine and they didn't tell him the steel cylinder would chew up weeds. Dad became discouraged and knew he had lost the field of grain. He had seeded it to sweet clover and it was growing like mad. Not it was showing up at the same height as the wheat. Mr. Blue said he would get the wheat and it would be O.K. He finally came and worked one forenoon getting ready and finally pulled into the grain field. Now this machine was a pattern of the oues out west with steel cylinder bars to thresh out the grain. Our field was now green instead of the ripened yellow color of wheat as the sweet clover was standing above the wheat. Dad walked behind the combine. They went a short distance and stopped. They looked in the hopper and what they saw was green manure. Mr. Blue worked that day changing this and that, speed and clearance and had to give up one part of a round and then quit. Dad was sick that nite. It was not going to be possible to do the field and Blue left. Two days later someone told Dad of a guy near Butler who might yet get that wheat out. We went to see "Red" Blaker. He agreed to come up and try it. He came up with the Allis tractor and Allis combine that had rubber

cylinder bars. He cut that field lower than we thought should be. The sweet clover came out the side full length, but some leaves and moisture were there. He got the field done and we put the wheat on the barn floor and kept stirring it to dry. Blaker saved the harvest!

During my high school years, a lot of newspapers were running stories of Chicago gangsters with names and pictures of men living on Chicago's west side along Cicero Ave. who were controlling interests throughout the mid-west. We read almost daily of the exploits of "Scar Face" Al Capone or "Pretty Boy" Floyd. These men and others like them seemed to confine themselves to that area and be content. During those times and shortly after, a name came to the surface again and again. The young man from Crown Pointe, Indiana was John Dillinger. The exploits of this man has filled many books and certainly this is of little interest here, however, he was lucky, very smart, daring and so successful in bank hold-ups and robberies eluding the police again and again that he captured the imagination of many people, especially young boys. Driving fast cars that could out-run police who had no radio and blanket cooperation as now available, Dillinger moved about freely. He and his gang stole cars frequently, mostly Ford V8's with 4 doors and they would hit banks in small towns with such precession they would come and be gone before anyone could be alerted. I spoke to a man whose son ran a filling station. One morning he recognized John as he was putting gas in the car. Dillinger instructed him to just fill the tank and he wouldn't be hurt. He did so very nervously. Bank after bank, chase and shoot-outs were a frequent thing. When the needed gang reinforcements came, they helped themselves. There were seen at the Dilgard gravel pit where Co. Rd. 31 crosses U.S. 6 one morning four men who took a few minutes there to relax then all four got in the Ford Sedan and drove down to Auburn, walked into the Police Station one by one with a submachine gun holding the officer in charge at bay while the other three carried out the guns and amo that were stored there and drove away not to be seen again. There was not a deal of death and injury just so clever and quietly unexpected and planned

bank robbery again and again. The Dillinger gang was becoming a legend and John a hero. It had to end and did so outside the little Biograph theatre in Chicago. A "lady of the evening" friend had agreed with the police to lead John into the ambush after the movie and all came to an end. I was caught up in the exploits at that time and wanted to see the Biograph. Millie and I hunted up the little movie house and the alley where he was captured. While John had escaped jail a long time, and at least on one occasion broke out with a make-shift hand gun that he fashioned from a cake of soap. He was so clever, but this time he would not escape death in a dirty back alley.

When Dad decided I was old enough that he could trust me with a team, he sent me to the back field at the end of the farm to a 9 acre field across the road from Clarence King's place. I had a three horse team pulling a three section drag. I got over the 9 acres before dinner and had it ready for Dad to plant. Well, it rained and he didn't get it done. On Thursday it had dried off enough so after dinner I went back with the team and drug the 9 acres again in the afternoon. I felt now I could do anything. 18 acres per day was anything. It was a lot of walking behind the drag on loose ground pushing the horses and almost always walking behind the plow. Dad preferred the Oliver 405 walking plow. Two horses could pull this if you gave them a little rest each round. On some occasion, we used 3 horses on a riding plow. I was doing that in a field east of Kings one time. Hubert came back to the field and brought me a drink and was ridding on the plow. He sat on the tongue steering the plow ahead of the plow shear. Horses were sometimes unsteady in their walk or you hit a stone. Many things happened. Anyhow, as we were going across the field, he fell from his precarious perch and before I could stop the team, he fell into the previous furrow and I plowed him under. I had to stop and dig him out, unhurt, spitting dirt and disappointed.

Queenie was the most spirited horse we ever had on the farm. This mare was a western horse with so much power and vitality that it was a pleasure to work her on any tool. I always wanted to ride that horse but Dad said, "You stay off that horse. You're gonna get hurt." Well, I had ridden all

the rest of 'em and so one time when he was gone, I decided I would take a ride on her. I could have lost my life that in that foolish stunt. I lead her alongside the gate at the barn and got on her back. While I had worked around her and we were friends, I thought, "What could happen?" Well, she trembled when I got on her back. It was a new experience and she was frightened. Maybe if I had seen her eyes at that time, I would have gotten off, but I didn't. We were just going back the lane and things went well on the way, but when we turned around and headed back to the barn, she bolted. I was riding bareback and having no saddle I had only her mane to hang on to. I did just that. I thought I was going to make it. She now was running wild as she came to the hill and was going about to descend to the barn when she suddenly began planting her front feet to slow down. I slid right up her neck and down on the right side. Somehow I got my legs around her neck with feet locked on top still hanging on to her mane for dear life. I was hanging under her neck and her pounding hoves would have done me in if I dropped. She was heavy and we were going by leaps, yet I will never forget the feeling of hanging there upside down like a sloth on a limb. The lunging wild horse racing for the shelter of the barn, her home, and senseless kid hanging under her neck knowing if he let go, he would be trampled to death and even catch heck from Dad. I was still hanging when she stopped at the barn door. I dropped off safe and sound and some say there is no God. I lost all desire to ride horses and can't recall ever doing so again until Barbara was 10 or 12 years old. At that time, we three were spending a week on a dude rance near Gaylord, Michigan. Millie decided to ride a vehicle on the trail, but Barb and I rode horses to an early breakfast out in the woods one morning, but I never enjoyed horses after that! I learned to dislike horses as Dad was particular as to caring for them. He insisted the collars be cleaned well everyday before you put them on. One morning he said, "I'm going to tell you as my dad told me, if you break a hame strap in the field, I'll give you a lickin'." What he meant was to lean into the horse when you draw up, look over all the harness, tugs, everything and most of all, he wanted each one curried and brushed

before the harness was put on. How I hated that!

Farm life was so different in my childhood days that now it seems like another world to make hay. In the summer with the horses and wagons, we pitched loose hay on the wagon then hauled it to the barn. Later Dad bought a hay loader and a new mower. The new one was a McCormick "gear in case" it was called. It was quiet and efficient, however, we had no dump rake or one of the new "side delivery" type rakes. He would mow down enough hay for one day, let it dry two or three days, then hook the loader behind the wagon and drive over the dry hay so it could be brought up on the wagon. The loader always missed the hay on the corners. He gave me a wide wooden rake to keep the corners raked in and cleaned up. Around and around and around, how I hated that job. I was quite young and it is the only time I considered running away from home. Later, Dad bought a dump rake, then went on and got a side rake to windrow the mowed hay and by virtue of the windrow and loader width, there seldom was need to rake the corners--happy day!

Pop would lay an empty sling on the hay rack and go to the field loading one-half load then we would lay a remaining sling on top of the half load and continue to complete the load. At the barn the horses were unhitched each load and used to pull the slingfuls up to the hay mow by use of ropes and pulleys. In the mow, the dangling rope could be pulled and the half load released to fall to the mow and be spread out over the large area provided. Haymaking was an ongoing thing, it seemed to me, all summer. Dad raised alfalfa and this grew to require two cuttings every year and often three times we made hay from those fields. Timothy and clover hay was a one-time crop.

The fields then were alive with small animal life and held interest for young boys. Mom would send me to the field with a drink of water for Dad and he would let me walk behind the plow and pick up fish worms. It seems there were so many exposed in the freshly turned soil. However, when he needed an abundance of fish worms for a fishing trip, we dug them near the chicken coop. The worms were always busy boring little holes in the clay soil to make it porous

to hold water. There were nests of bumble bees here and there to sting the horses and harass the operator. We kids had shingles cut with handles and went looking for them to secure the honey. The big bumble bees were a rather easy fight, but when you took on the smaller faster variety, we got stung quite frequently. They would get in our hair and we would throw down the paddle and dig 'em out. There were bees everywhere and while working the flowers, clover or any blooms, they seldom would bother, but when you poked into their nest, you had a fight right now. One time while hauling clover seed on Riley King's, I was loading the wagon nearly a full load to go in when someone pitched up a doodle of clover, hot and dry, loose and dirty, it contained a bee's nest. I didn't know it and they didn't know it. I stuck my fork in to spread it around and that's as far as I got. The bees came boiling out. They blamed me for destroying their house. I couldn't get away up there in the loose hay. Yes, I got stung here and there and my face, nose, lips, eyes began to swell all at once. One of the men took my wagon and sent me home. I walked home and when I got there I could hardly talk to tell Mom what happened. She painted me with a paste of soda and water and I went to bed. I think the bees vaccinated me against arthritis. The next day I got back to work and was glad we had no camera that day!

The fields had an abundance of birds. Quail and turtle doves and kildeer, which laid on their side as if injured to draw you away from their young. There were all kinds of butterflies working the fields. It was interesting to see the multitude of species of butterflies in all colors and designs. Moths were plentiful and in the evening the fireflies flies came out. Sometimes the valley area between the house and barn would sparkle with fireflies. We could catch them. Mom would give us a glass jar and we made lanterns--electric lanterns, or we would crush one on the back of our finger to make a glowing ring, exclusive it was.

The evenings were so different. First off, it got *dark*. There were no lights to illuminate farm houses or barns and the lots were dark. Sometimes we would sit out in the yard and watch the Northern Lites. We

would see them over and over and would scarcely mention them unless they were exceptionally bright and lit up the sky unusually bright. Now it's on the radio and T.V. if they are detected.

When our house was so hot to sleep well, Mom let me sleep out in the front yard. I enjoyed that and did it often. It seemed the thing to do. I guess the moon, stars and fireflies, little comets and all such began their show at night. Perhaps elimination of fence rows, draining swamps and heavy repeated sprayings has taken its toll on smaller life first. One night while sound asleep under the pine tree in the front yard, I woke up to find a stranger shaking me to get him some gas. His car was nearby along the road. This was not uncommon then. When I got older, after Jay Mead was gone, I got his room and there the window on the west opened out on the roof of the back porch. It was a good place to sleep. I'd crawl out the window with a comforter and usually there was a little air moving there and it made good sleep till say 2 a.m. and believe it or not, I'd wake up and was cold. Then I would go back to bed. We had no fans, no way to get a little air moving and a nice breeze was a welcome thing.

As I think about it, many mysteries come to mind and not the least is how Mom acquired all the food and got it prepared to set on the table three times a day for our group. When one considers the wood stove, water supply, dish washing, lack of refrigeration, work in the barn because Dad would not milk the cows, care for children, feed all company, church and Aid, it can go on the long list of duties.

As a child, it was my duty to help her pick items from the garden--no small task there--not to say keeping the weeds out either. We would gather raspberries and blackberries from our woods. Dad might take us along the road someplace to gather 3 bushel of elderberries. We picked plums, peaches, apples and pears from trees we had. We sold some plums each year. We had a huge mulberry tree behind the house and it was easy to climb and a favorite snack-shack for me. When Mom wanted some fruit from this tree in quantity, we got about four or five of us to hold a bed sheet under a limb while another shook the fruit off. It worked fast,

required a lot of cleaning that way. We had a quince bush near the house that would yield this fruit and Mom would get one now and then to add to canning other items.

When we got a bit older, Dad bought a cider press so we could pick a couple pails of apples and squeeze our cider as needed. It was convenient, to say the least, and we kids were not the only beneficiaries either, it was a popular meeting place for flies.

Pop needed a cash income and turned to raising strawberries. We didn't have good ground and our yield wasn't great. The berries required much hand labor to set new plants, cut runners and keep straw between the rows to retain the moisture and keep the weeds in control. Picking the berries was a task too. He gave that up after three or so years and went to raising tomatoes. With the Hall-Stingle plant only three and a half miles from our house, we did that for a number of years. We would set from three to five acres of tomatoes and this was a good cash crop and the farmers who had children could utilize their labor after school and Saturdays for picking.

Mom would preserve food all summer long beginning at the first greenies of Spring. She would almost scratch the snow to get a mess of dandelions and mix them with mashed potatoes. In fact the women at church enjoyed telling each other they had their first mess of these greens. Everything from apricots to currants went into canning jars and kept! Watermelon rinds were a favorite of us kids. It took a lot of work but that didn't effect us--just so we had 'em. The basement held shelves and shelves and shelves of canned goods. An art of hand work in itself.

Threshing at Forrest Miller's was always a challenge. First off, they had several fields of wheat and oats, three or more of each yearly. Forrest always had lots of help, for he would send two men everywhere and everyone came to help him. We boys knew there was no better food, but a lot of hard work. Much of the grain was cut and shocked in fields of greater distance from home than most, requiring more teams, bigger loads of bundles and good loading practices. I never seemed to pitch in the field. I ran a bundle wagon from field to the separator or worked at the separator hauling grain from there to

the bins for storage. It was hard work. The long distances with iron wheeled wagons, a rough lane to haul over and hard rough ground required each load to be near perfect. Bundles had to be laid just so and the center sheaves binding each layer well or they would slide out and you would lose a bunch or upset a load before you arrived. As I returned with an empty wagon once, I saw Glenn Forrest cross a dead furrow at an angle and over went the entire load. He started to jump opposite the roll-over of the wagon rack, came down on the edge of it and was hurt in that one. Their wagon was so rocky on the front bolster, it was difficult to use. One time he tipped a load off west of the barn in the lane when a wheel dropped in a washout and dumped the whole load plugging the lane and bringing a halt to the entire crew. Sometimes I would help with the grain as it came from the separator. Often they would put 2 bushel in a sack and we would carry them to the grainaries. We preferred a sack and a half for easier work. We could carry them OK, but to go up steps all day long at the bin and dump the bags was a job. Often, the air was so thick with straw and hulls, sometimes so you could hardly see. The building seemed to encircle the machine and air currents kept it a dirty, dirty place to work. Forrest usually worked on the straw stack. Most of the men stacked their straw only now and then, but Fuzzy would stack it each year, trying to make the sides straight up and down so as to shed water and preserve the straw. As the straw fell on the stack from the blower, Fuzzy kept it moved out to the extreme edge and the finished job took up less barnyard space. It, too, was a dirty job as wind here was always in a circle around the "L" shaped barns. Sometimes we would thresh here into the third day. It always took two days or more it seemed. One time when it was so darn hot, so darn dirty and everyone was cross, Wayne Miller and I each pulled our loads up along side the separator at the same time. Dude called over to me as we wrapped our lines and prepared to pitch bundles into the feeder. He said, "I'm gonna' plug her up." "Oh, my gosh", I said. "Don't do that." "Why not, I'm gonna." He meant it too. I was scared of the result and ran to the back of my load, left my fork up front and I just stood there afraid to even be

close to the feeder when the belts would come off. Well, Dude took off the row on the far side of the wagon quite well and I was beginning to think he wouldn't do it, but when the center was now free, he started to pick up the speed and the feeder had all it could carry, I knew this was it! There was going to be trouble now. With the center all cleaned out, he started back with the row of bundles near the feeder close by and with the load above the feeder yet he could dump them off so fast he did just that. Now at that time, they had traded the big steam engine for this tractor a Nicholds & Shepherd. It was a huge thing and had terrific power, but she began to groan. The feeder was piled up higher than the entrance with sheaves and Dude threw in some cross-wise at that. I knew it. All Hell broke loose. The auger of grain plugged up. That belt came off first then one by one things stopped. Grain on the ground, belts twisted and wrapped. Well, Carl ran for the engine and shut her down. He and Brown Albright, the separator man, went to work turning wheels by hand to unplug conveyors and augers. It was a mess. Fuzzy came down from the stack and helped to clean up. The grain wagon crew was cleaning up wheat from all over the ground. Hot, sweating men were working, all of them except two-- Gene Reinoehl and Dude Miller. Well, I was scared of Forrest Miller and I expected trouble but nothing happened. Dude wasn't done yet. He wasn't satisfied so he began to needle the men by saying the darndest things. He began like this, "Seems like a good day to thresh and here we are doing nothing. Why can't we get a machine that will thresh when we're ready? Maybe we need more help to run what we got." He just kept on and I was actually holding my breath because I'd told him before never to plug it up when I'm around. "If you want to when I'm back to the field, OK but my Dad and Fuzzy together will kill me", and I meant it!. I knew it was coming. Dude said, " Well, if we just had someone that knew how to run it, maybe we could get along." There was Carl, his dad, down on his knees working the auger back and forth and Brown doing the same, Fuzzy off the stack with shovel and sacks, cleaning up spilled grain. Tensions were high when his dad turned to look up at Dude and said, "Dudye, if I knowed as much about this

machine as you do, I'd do something about it." Dude spit right back saying to his dad, "You come around sometime when I'm not so busy and I'll tell you about it." I will never, never forget that moment. Here was his dad trying to do a good job for his successful brother, Forrest Miller, and they had their hands full. Not a single word was spoken after that. They just worked and sweat and kept still.

The big Nicholds & Shepherd oil-pull required no team and water tank wagon as did the steam engine, but it was not without problems. Sometimes it would refuse to start after lunch. In the morning fresh and cold, it was quite dependable but when it was hot, it could be a hassle. On the right side was a huge heavy thick cast iron flywheel and once speed was up to working rpms (revolutions per minute), the heavy wheel kept even speed and power for sudden loads. To start the engine, one would insert a rather long iron bar in one of the many slots around the wheel and by pulling down, one by one you could bring it to the compression cycle. There it took great energy and often a second man would help pull it thru this. If it started, you must remove the bar quickly, if not you began all over again and again. Sometimes they would have us boys take turns on the cranking bar--it took power.

The separator was a Riverside Special from Battlecreek, Michigan, I think. At least that's where the men went for parts. We boys never cried when something broke down for it meant a day or two break in an everyday thing.

We'd come in for dinner at 12 noon and the woman of the house, along with neighbor help, had the usual tubs of water in the yard for hot sweaty men to wash up. As always, a great meal was served and there were always several pies. Threshers liked pies, all kinds and we had 'em every day, I think. When a farm boy of 16 puts in 12 to 15 hours a day in hard work, it is unbelievable the amount of food is consumed. Mashed potatoes were the favorite, hot and with lots of butter. I would like a picture of the dinner tables of Flossie Monroe, Mrs. Meloy or Francis Clark. These were prepared on wood ranges too, as oil stoves were not large enough to prepare all the quantity and quality needed.

As usual, the first thing after dinner, we would give the horses some grain. They were fed hay when we went to dinner. Now as they ate grain, we would sit around and listen to the men talk or the boys would sit under a tree by themselves. One time while down at Forrest's, about 20 or more men were sitting under a locust tree. It got quiet and Glenn said, "Jake, why don't you tell us another one of your dang lies?" I thought Jake Smith would whip up on him but he didn't even answer. Jake always told of the woman who could put a spell on you and that was it. The day before he told of a man who got her to come and put the "spell" around his chicken coop as someone was stealing his chickens and sure enough the next morning, he went out and there a man stood with three chickens in each hand and couldn't move 'till he got her to come and break the spell. We would laugh at them each time, but I sure wouldn't have hit him with that direct statement as Glenn did. We laughed all afternoon over that one, "Did he wet his pants? Was he hungry? Were his legs stiff? Did he blink? He couldn't move?!!!"

Lester Grate lived one mile east of our house in early days and farmed a considerable area with no tractor. They did, however, have several teams of horses and a team of big powerful mules. This team was a pair of real workers and were known around the area. One developed a bad habit. When it was led out to the water tank at the end of the barn, this mule would load up with water and when satisfied, would give a hard jerk with his head yanking the leading rope from the grasp of the attendant. When loose, he would run down the driveway to the road and then it took help to get him home and secured again. Lester (we called "Bing") said he would break that mule of that habit right now. He took down the big main hay rope from the barn, coiled it outside the barn and tied one end to the big 8"x8" beam in the barn. Then he took the other end into the stall and tied it around the animal's neck and led him to the tank. Sure enough, he yanked loose and took off down the driveway at top speed. Bing said that when he came to the end of the rope at top speed, the barn creaked, his head came back thru under himself, the body continued on for a bit as the rope stretched out he hit the driveway with a long neck and a cloud of

dust. He laid right there. They couldn't get him up so they let him lay. Later he returned to the barn by himself. No one saw him return or just when he returned, but he never broke and ran away again.

Across the road from Grates was a woods and Earl and Al Forrest were hauling logs during the winter months. Earl said that one morning it was below zero. He and Al each headed into the woods to get an early load. As Al was loading a log, the big butt end was advancing too fast to drop on the wagon on uneven line. Al called the team to stop. They did. He told them to "hold it" as he took a cant hook and was placing it around to line up. As he did so, one horse stepped back. The log was huge and rolled back down a bit. Then the other horse stepped back as the log turned more. Al was so cold from the ride to the woods and was short of temper. He grabbed the big black snake whip he carried, picked up power with his big right hand and exclaimed out loud, "I'm going to teach you a whole lot in just a little bit." He swung the heavy whip but it got out of control and came back and engulfed him. Around and around and the thin leather encircled his cold face cutting great welts as it went around and around to the very end. Earl said he thought he never saw a man hurt so badly. Al sat on a stump for a long time with his head in his hands, never saying a word.

Among one of my early recollections was a time one day in the Spring of the year when Mom and I were going to take a cold drink back to the field to Dad. We walked down to the barn then back the lane about 200 yards to a gate on the right. This was a big big field. I would learn later it was 14 acres. The neighbors always referred to field locations as "the 9 acre field" or "the 12 acre field". This was our "14 acre field"; a big one indeed. He was plowing there with two horses pulling a small 12" or 14" walking plow called an Oliver 405, an easy running plow. He had the lines tied together behind his back leaving one hand on each plow handle applying constant pressure to first one side then the other to keep the plow level and guide it through the sod. How we waited at the gate as he was some distance away in the field. As he neared, Mom let me take Pop the water. She waited at the gate for me but kept an eye on me. This had been a pasture

field the year before and was solid with green grass and was plowing well one furrow at a time, one horse walking in the furrow and the other on the flat ground, tugs hooked to a double-tree and pinned to the end of the plow beam with a clevis. After a fresh drink and brief rest, Dad waved at Mom and she waved to him as he turned his back to us and resumed plowing. The fresh turned earth revealed upcoming fish worms and now and then a mouse, I wanted to walk in the furrow behind him. I went a short distance but couldn't keep up. Mom called to me to bring the glass jar and come back. during the early, younger days in the married life, Mom had some free time now and then to just sit and play the piano or the organ. The instruments sat end to end. She preferred the piano as the organ required continuous foot pumping to make air to maintain the musical sounds. I could sit on the piano bench with her. She had little music to use other than the church hymnals. There was always one of them opened to familiar songs. She would play one after the other, jump up and run to the stove or check on the baby. Because she did not hear well and Grandma could hear little, required more regular physical inspections. Grandma was always busy doing something. The most often the most single frequent thing was darning socks. Mom did the patching of overalls, which was an every week or everyday thing it seemed, or I should say "seamed." She would have all the old pair cut up and made patched from those. She worked at the sewing machine so much. I never saw Grandma run that machine. She carried a tool in her hand a bit larger than an icecream cone baseball-shaped at the top. She stretched worn stockings over this top and proceeded to darn them, weaving row after row of thread filling the hole with new life.

As I've mentioned before, Grandma liked fish very much, in fact she was so hungry for fish she was easy to get along with when Dad went fishing. I guess there was a time earlier the men caught a few and she enjoyed them. Uncle Austin would bring some now and then but not a great many. As Dad was such a good fisherman, we could almost count on a fish meal when he returned. I don't know when or why, but all at once they put a stop to fishing in the Spring as had been the

practice. No more fishing while the fish were laying eggs. The bluegill would be on beds near the shore in shallow water and Dad would catch a bucket full. Well, that practice ended and one was limited to 25 fish per person. This created quite a topic of conversation among the men, especially the fisherman like Pop. One nice thing came out of this though, because all at once, I got to go along! I didn't know why until one day I heard Dad and Earl Forrest talking and learned we could catch 50 now! Dad could catch 49 and I could catch one so from then on, I went. Most of the time it was fun. "Most" is correct, but there were times it was otherwise and I'd guess these were times when it just wasn't worth it. Dad would wake me between 3 and 4 o'clock in the morning and 'til I got dressed, he had sausage, eggs, pancakes baked and all was ready. Sleepily, I was eating now, or else I learned. He would back the car out and we would tie on the fish poles over the top of the car. His way was to lay them on top, tie the butts to the to the radiator cap or the front fender, then pull the tips down and tie them to the spare tire. The bait, lines and such went in the car and away we went, most often to Golden Lake. Eddy Rohm had a string of boats there to rent and he looked forward to Dad's homemade beer or wine and there seldom was a boat charge. The drive to Golden Lake would bring a scattered filter of light in the east and we could see enough to get the oars that were laying next to the building and the anchors were left in the boats. We put our stuff in the boat, Dad would row and I sat in the back. He would row us clear to the extreme end of that lake called "Cranetown". When we'd arrive, it was light enough to see to fish. Dad liked to fish near the shore near the restricted areas when the fish were bedding. If we had good luck, we could be home by 10:30 with the 50 fish limit. While Dad was an expert at catching them in those days ... I was NOT! If the fish didn't bite right now, I wanted to do one of ten things; move the boat to "over there", set the line for deeper or shallower, use larger and larger bait, go to deep water; always something. But my worst trick of all was to tangle my line. If I just tangled it by carelessness in throwing out or such, I could get it straightened out but when we were

throwing in under trees and I'd throw too near a branch and that lead weight took the hook and bait 46 times around a twig, there we sat. Sometimes I'd act like I was fishing, holding the pole the same for a time for I was afraid to tell him. Sometimes I'd pull and break the line. Sometimes Dad would just ignor me and let me sit there holding the pole. He'd get so mad If he was catching one now and then and had to pull up anchor and row me up to the limb and thus scare all the prospects away. He was generally quite patient, though, and gradually I learned, but it took a while. One time we caught a bunch, maybe the limit, and had them all in the fish sack hanging over the side of the boat as usual but forgot to lift them in and started to row back just a short distance when Dad thought of it. The fish were all gone. The sack had pulled off and away they all went. It was 10 a.m. and the sun was hot but we had to drive back home and get to work now. What a day! Most trips brought lots of fish. Mom and I cleaned them and Dad would go to the field. Those days, Grandma was happy. Dad said she could enter those bluegills in one side of her mouth and the bones came out the otherside and she swallowed the meat. She would have the largest pile of bones by her plate. She really could put the fish away!

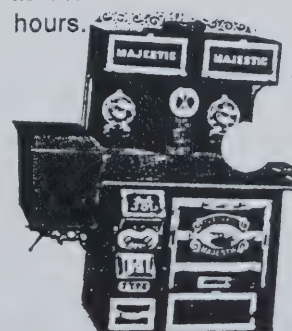
While Grandma may never completely endorsed Charley Reihoehl for a son-in-law, she liked him for several great and important reasons. The slight income she and her daughter realized was so meager and she no longer could do the work needed to supplement the income with chores and outdoor obligations. Dad went to farming intensely. He built up the livestock ; and could cope with winter weather, frozen pumps and all and laid in a large supply of wood nearby. He greatly expanded the variety of table food which was very much in evidence because of the expanded garden and "truck patch". Because Dad was quit the hunter, Mom was able to change the diet with golden brown fried rabbit and such as outside game was new here. Taxes were paid and Dad began paying Grandma for the farm. She always kept a little money in her purse. Dad never said one cross word to Grandma that I can remember. He accepted her with a degree of respect and found little fault as we co-existed in the same house for ten years or

so. He made an effort in those days to get along with Mom and Grandma both. He would, however, resent Grandma giving Dale Benjamin money each and every time he came to visit. She always did so and he was always mad about that. Dad felt very strong about Dale boarding off us each time. Dale would come by unexpectedly from the west coast, maybe staying a week or 3 days. It was always the same; Grandma would give him all the money she had whether it be \$3 or \$33. It was a good thing Grandma could not hear him on that particular subject, but Uncle Orley was so well liked and such a good man and out of great respect for him, his son Dale supposedly got away with so much not only at our house but everywhere he went for a lifetime, as it appeared to me.

As I take time to reflect upon life in those earlier days, one thing keeps coming to mind and that is the mountainous work that faced my mother each day. While I lived in the house, so to speak, until age 10, I suppose I was with Grandma and Mom all that time. When I was old enough to help in the field, simple tasks to hoe weeds in the corn, rake hay by hand, help do chores as these became duties, I became more associated with Dad. It was then Mom had babies and was so deep into caring for her little ones and Grandma was of concern then too, that I grew more into a hired man. A regret and its understandable burden remain with me and I will carry it 'til the year 2000 and beyond(?) that while I appreciated her so much as I saw the cost she paid all along, to make me the best home I could have ever found if I were given years to hunt door to door. I do not understand how I could appreciate her as I did and yet neglect to tell her frequently how much a starving recluse lost in the desert would thank his benefactor that paused only once to give him a cold drink and sandwich, yet she gave to me morning, noon and nite. She gave as the widow giving her mite, all she had. That's all--that's the most anyone can give and she did it each day, joyously and so generously and totally without expecting anything in return. I think that working with Dad more and more, I didn't realize what all I learned from him - and that I did, for I learned to cut myself and it didn't hurt. I learned, of course, not to cry. I never got used to Dad speaking cross to Mom. At the

first word, I would look for the door unless we were sitting down to a meal or such and I couldn't slip away. I would get far away to the shop or down to the barn and find something to do. It would effect my meals for a time or two. I didn't get over those times quickly. While I did not actually see it, I have reasons to believe there were acts of great inconsiderations. I saw evidence of such and I'm sure they existed, yet how could I lack the backbone to regularly state my love and appreciation that I felt. It's a mystery to me and a sad one also. Perhaps to record on this sheet a glimpse of the magnitude of duties she performed could help a bit. I'll do just that.

There were so many household duties and it seems to me each was so hard to do. To prepare a meal now is so simple; open the refrigerator to get milk, eggs, butter, meat, etc; turn on the stove and in a couple of minutes you are on your way. It was not so at our house. We had a one gallon paint pail on the back porch that we kept half full of kerosene with clean corn cobs all the time. One or two "oil cobs" were the first thing to build a fire each and every morning and before each meal if the fire went out. Then we used kindling and some good dry wood. A cold stove took time to get up to cooking temperature and there was NO regulation of heat. How Mom could produce the good tasty food like she did, I'll never know. The fire was always too high or too low. When too hot, she moved stuff to the end to cook quickly or catch more of the heat, remove the stove lids and set a pot directly on the fire, but you paid a price each time as black soot burned the surface and had to be scoured and cleaned and this entire procedure was performed three times daily seven days per week and 365 1/4 days per year. In cold weather, the kitchen fire was refueled all day after an early building in the morning, but fall and spring, it often was let to go out and was relit when mealtime neared. Dad finally got a good kerosene stove for the "summer kitchen" and Mom enjoyed that after a meal as there was no heat left as the big Home Comfort range was hot for hours.



Mom would get up real early in the summer to do the special chores before the hot part of the day set in. She had to bake bread, in early times, sifting and resifting the flour and mixing the dough, buttering the bread pans and sometimes, when I was small, she let me mess with the butter, doing just that! I suppose my "help" made twice the work cleaning up. The stove had a lever to encourage the heat to encircle the oven rather than go directly up the chimney. Well the stove was hot and the oven remained hot all morning on those days and she tried to get that chore done so we could go to the barn ! (early) Remember, there was no regulation of heat to bake anything!

Another day of hot stove work was Monday mornings. It was wash day. At one time we had two big copper boilers for heating wash water. They covered the top of the kitchen stove. They had dents in them from pouring after pouring. Copper dented easily. These were filled from the hand pump in the "summer" kitchen. A pipe there ran down into the cistern where rain water, "soft water" we called it, accumulated from the roof of the house via the eaves spouting. When the cistern got low, the water was dipped by a rope and bucket. You removed the lid and dropped the bucket upside down and pulled the rope at the right time and you had some good luck. We needed lots of water for washing and rinsing and all.

Mom used a bluing she added to the water "to make white things whiter", she said. A little bag of blue chalk did the trick. The soap was huge cakes of homemade lye soap. She and Grandma made soap each year. They saved the tallow and all fat lard and grease. That, together with lye and know-how produced soap. It was cut into cakes to use year 'round. When Dad got the 1 1/2 horsepower engine and hooked up the line shaft to run the washer, that was beautiful. Mom liked that. We would start the engine when she was ready and the washer could be on and off by a lever crowding a belt onto the washer pulley. It worked well, if the engine didn't stop. When it did, the water got cold. Each week she would wash some on the hand wash board. Mom couldn't get started washing as early as Myrtle Forrest and I

think one reason being that Mom always had chores at the barn, with darn few exceptions, and I don't think Myrtle did. Those exceptions were at childbirth when Mom might miss at that time. We used peach baskets for clean clothes and carried the washed clothes out the back door to the four long clotheslines stretched out there with a good sized sack of clothes pins hanging there, too. When the clothes got dry, they were brought back into the house in the baskets and kept for ironing. Now that was a hot day ritual also. I believe those flat irons weighed 6 to 8 pounds. Now Tuesday was ironing day, all day long, too. It seems to me that everything was ironed and folded. It took a lot of time and the wood range and kitchen was so darn hot that day. Like wash day, the house was hotter than outdoors. Now sewing went on all week. Mom and Grandma were always mending or making dresses or diapers. The sewing machine ran whenever someone had a minute to spare because the needy garments were piled up on the leaf of the machine for repair as time would allow. There was no time to read a book or go shopping or go visiting. There was always work to be done. Just washing the dishes was a chore because there were so many. Being there was no running water, it was unhandy for water. The dishpans were endlessly used for lamp and lantern chimneys as they were dirty too and required daily washing and wiping dry for the night. We needed every one of them.

I had no feeding or cleaning chores to do, only the milking. Dad did all the rest. I never saw him milk three times in my life -- he just would not.

Our home life was so different as to make one wonder if we were in another country. Could it have been as I recall, or is it all just a dream? How many times company would come at 4 p.m. Mom would say, "Go get the cows, somebody, and also a cake of ice from Rhineharts", and she would stir up a batch of ice cream. We might make a batch at 2 p.m. or 6 p.m. She would let us make whipped cream with the egg beater and sugar and produce our own "Dream Whip" and eat it like popcorn. Speaking of popcorn, that was a luxury we took for granted. We had dishpans full of popcorn. Dad would remove the lid from the stove, set a big iron pot down in the fire and popped the corn. Two batches made a

picking across a bush from her. The raspberries were thick around the swamp and we would come up when it was time to get dinner with a goodly amount of big juicy berries. After the raspberries were gone, the black berries came on and were also plentiful back there. We were after elderberries by the peach basket full along the roads. When they were at their peak, Dad would drive us around in the evening and help gather the stems with the clusters of berries, the baskets of gatherings were then stripped of berries, all by hand. We would sit around the house and back porch holding the stems in one hand and stripped the little berries off with the other. It may sound like slow work, but it went quite fast. The goal, of course, was elderberry pie, a delicacy. She could make an elderberry pie an inch and a quarter thick on a wood range with uncertain heat, yet come out perfect!

With few exceptions, Mom could get her hands on a little money from one source, her chickens. She could select the setting hens, place the eggs and 3 weeks later we had new stock. Sometimes we would have a dozen or more hens and chickens at one time. Mom looked after them always trying to house them at night to avoid predators.

Before the days of medicine and doctoring it was Mom who restored health when there was a threat. She had homemade remedies for all normal sickness or injuries, stomach pains, diarrhea, constipation (that was simple--epsom salts!) if you even mentioned it. I was told our hired man ate it dry by the handful when needed. They put mine in a glass of water and drank it down, non-stop, or sometimes castor oil did the trick.

It still amazes me how she knew how to do so many things. She knew how to quilt with the Ladies Aid or when we had one in frames at our place, which we often did. She milked the cows, always. When Mom was sick or had a baby and missed an evening or even two, Dad would, as last resort, submit to milking. I began helping milk when I was small so I'd milk all of them and Dad would do all the rest; he'd tie 'em, feed 'em, clean the stables, everything. I'd just milk 'em. He'd come by and tell me to rest a minute or so now and then. I didn't though. He was good to me when I did it all. I got the first pancake and could set by the stove and he did not care, in

fact he would joke with me about the cats and little things, I liked that and would milk like heck!

One could write not a book but volumes on life at home. As you pause and think, it is no less than a miracle to remember so plain incidents that came about and are stored in such a tiny area of tissue and chemicals and electricity known as memory. A miracle it is.

I can see Minnie and I taking a trailer load of hogs to Butler to sell. It was opening day for new Chevrolet 1939 models. We stopped at Maxton's car sales and drove one from my old car. It was great.

When the cider press set in the back yard and as we got thirsty we'd run out and get a pail of apples and sure enough, squeeze us some fresh cider.

Mom would want some mulberries, in quantity, and we'd get two or three or four if we could, to hold a sheet under the tree. My job was to get up on a limb and shake 'em, green sticks, leaves and all. Then we all had more important things to do, but they would show up on the table later, cleaned and delightful.

I recall using the running chassis of an old buggy. I made a board floor. A shaft 3 feet long held in place with a series of wires and a chain from an old manure spreader attached to each front wheel to steer and pushed it to the top of the barn hill. We'd all climb on for the ride down, way down, that is if steering chain stayed on. If not, we would pile up head long in either the rail fence on the left or wire hog fence on the right. My first "car" wasn't dependable!

How much fun it was to throw a few clods or a stone or two against the old outhouse when it was occupied. Such simple things, but lending to fun and laughter.

Millie was going with Ralph Parsel after graduation and did so until he contracted cancer of the spine. He died a painful death by degrees. Ralph was a classmate of mine. While his brother, Glenn, was older in the class of 1933. I would on occasion, see Millie at Fretz's Grain Co. where she worked as a bookkeeper or I would see her at the local Kroger store. She quit her job to help Ward and Lula Parsel take care of Ralph as time went on. After his death, I met her at

dishpan rounded up with good smelling, good eating stuff that I've never tired of yet to this day. I sure enjoy that cheap and simple delicacy.

While Dad had good luck smoking our meat, the hams and shoulders, etc. and yards of sausage draped over racks above the fire, the slow smouldering heat and smoke produced some of the best tastes ever. I recall playing in the driveway with my wagon down at the north drive and saw the smokehouse on fire. I ran and told Mom and Grandma. It burned down but they salvaged some meat. The fire had gotten too hot and grease from the meat dripped down and started the fire, so Pop said. It was the only time I recall a problem with the smoking process. Pop could produce good sausage, I want to tell you. It was the best! It took much work butchering, scraping the casings, then washing and washing the casings and stuffing them, but it was well worth all the effort.

On cold nites, Mom would heat the soapstone on the kitchen stove after supper so it would be ready for use at bedtime. When more were needed, she heated the flat irons and wrapped them with towels and put them under the covers in the foot of our beds to keep our feet warm and put us to sleep. Every morning when she made the beds, she'd dig them out and set them back again for use that nite. Sorting corn husks to replenish the bed mattresses (called ticks), or washing and drying chicken feathers to do the same for those big thick fluffy things we slept on.

The work that it took to keep a family supplied was enormous; things that today's generation wouldn't even begin to think of.

Just planning the meals for 7 to 10 people three times a day when Dad would not go to town only on Wednesdays and later on Wednesdays and Saturdays. If you ran out of salt or matches, well, that was it. We just got along.

In communications, letters were a precious thing and had great value. Mom would read them outloud during dinner. She enjoyed letters from the Stomms, Owen Elsons, church folk, everyone. Aunt Irma and Aunt Jenny wrote often. We read the papers end to end for news that had happened.

Some neighbors had radios later. We did not. As I have earlier reported, Beth and I would walk down to Riley King's to listen to

the radio on Sunday evening. We kids would lay on the floor, Arlo, Jay, Beth and I and watched the clock. Riley would try to save battery life and not turn the radio on before the program we all would be most interested in hearing, then we were quiet.

I'd show Mom the latest things and we would talk about 'em. She helped me later get something I had wanted for a long time. It cost \$3.71. It was a scooter. The very best one at that. I played with that for a long time. It was a sturdy, well built toy indeed. When I did develop a serious foot injury, a stone bruise they called it, it was my means of transportation for eight weeks. My right foot looked terrible near the center of my arch. A big red sore developed and healed slowly. I gave that foot a lot of miles riding everywhere as the left one had to learn to propell me. No sidewalk either. It was grass, dirt and gravel, but it worked. Mom would give me a little money from sales to the huckster wagon. Grandma would give me a little now and then. Dad would have an extra nickle for me too, but Uncle Charley came each week with funny papers and he gave me 5¢ for a quart of ground cherries. Sometimes he paid more than I asked. I played a dirty trick on Grandma sometimes. I would get money for church collections, a penny for class and a nickle for upstairs. Sometimes I'd skip the penny for class and put it in the plate up stairs and add the nickle to my bank roll. Alas, they caught me and that was it for me. The only way to get money then was to work pulling weeds for Grandma or cleaning the chicken coop for Mom. It was slow going! Late summer was berry picking time. Mom would provide us with a small pail or kettle and a binder twine to put around our neck. She and I would walk back the lane from the house to the woods. It was about a half mile to the backside of the woods, but we would head for the center. Here there was a pond, a year round waterhole, where animals thrived. Before draining ditches became so popular, these ponds were everywhere. We wore straw hats, loose shirts with long sleeves to ward off the hordes of mosquitos. She had pieces of cheesecloth, that we draped over our heads, hanging down all around. This kept the bites to a minimum on face and neck. Only our hands were exposed. I thought Mom

While his brother, Glenn, was older in the class of 1933. I would on occasion, see Millie at Fretz's Grain Co. where she worked as a bookkeeper or I would see her at the local Kroger store. She quit her job to help Ward and Lula Parsel take care of Ralph as time went on. After his death, I met her at Waterloo and we talked of Ralph and the shock of it all at the beginning of life now.

One Sunday in late May, I think, I drove over to her house and when she came to the door, I asked her if she would like to go to a show that evening. She said she couldn't as there were plans for that evening but she said, "I have no plans for next Sunday." That sounded encouraging so we decided to go someplace the next Sunday evening. We attended the Air Show at the Angola airport. All afternoon planes flew around, racing and performing acrobats and all. The music played "I Found a Million Dollar Baby at the Five and Ten Cent Store." It was a fun afternoon with the hot dogs and cold drinks and friends and jokes. That evening was our Children's Day program at church so we went to that and it made quite a day. We were now beginning to be quite well acquainted. Sometimes I would take Beth, Minnie, Alice and whoever could go and pick up Millie on the way to attend the free movies at Waterloo along with the crowds. Often, I spent Sunday evening with Millie and we might go to a good movie. One Sunday evening, we walked back the lane to their woods and sat near the creek. The sun was warm, the grass was so green and we were carrying Millie's little box camera. I said if someone came along, they could take our picture. Of course no one did. I set the camera on a stone, laid a rock on top to hold it in place, broke off a long stick and we sat down together. I fished with the stick 'till I tripped the camera button and took our picture. It turned out well. One can see my one hand holding the stick. At times we would return after a movie and sit in the car to hold hands and talk when here came a car. It would be Roger Thompson and Arlo King with a hasty in and out, they got a kick out of that but Vern and Gertie didn't like their antics. They could hear them drive in and if not, they did hear them leave. They would come in without their lights on in order to surprise us. After several times, Vern was getting a bit mad at the boys because Vern would

question Millie as to who was driving that car. Well, one nite I saw a car turn the corner up east and suspected it was them. I got ready to disappoint them. Sure enough, they turned off their lights so we started to drive out so we'd be gone when they came in. In my haste to leave without my lights on, I ran over a young tree in the lawn. I think Vern had set it the year before. I made a noise anyhow, but it wasn't much and we got away. They drove in, looked around, but didn't find us. The boys backed up and spotted around looking for us but when they couldn't find us, they left. When they backed up Vern saw them and he gave them a chewing out never letting them get one word in to defend themselves. He went on the next day he saw his tree all skinned up and said he wasn't tough enough. He never asked me if I had ran over it. If he had, I would have told him, but as it was, it was best left alone. The boys didn't come back, not to drive in on the property anyhow. I think they would go past sometimes but they lost their enthusiasm. I never got around to telling Vern about that.

Vern was good to me. He told me I could use his car if I had need. I did later use it when he asked Millie and Me to take Laurence Badman's kids to Chicago. He had a 1935 Plymouth. It was a nice car to drive. We left early one morning and got up to Chicago and parked along the outter drive #41 and watched the sunrise. We had to wait for the museum to open. It was a good day, but I'll bet he was glad when I put the car back in the garage. He used to take some men each fall and go to South Dakota hunting pheasants. While moving from one location to another, a gun went off in the back seat. He told me of his fear to turn around and look. All was well. Tryannis Schlosser was holding his shot gun with the barrel pointed straight up, stock between his legs. Somehow he tripped the hammer and the gun fired a load of shot thru the roof. He sat directly behind Vern who was driving. He patched the hole and all was well, but no more trips to South Dakota!

When I find time to sit down and write of things I recall, the easiest and most frequent things are about my mom. To have been born on the day I was in September 1916 at just the time a lady 500 miles away would have need of a baby and to find my way from East St. Louis to a farm house in Northeast Indiana

to have a home with her and her mother is indeed some strange coincidence to say the least.

I recall, a short time after the buggy trip to visit the Reinoehl's when the buggy nearly upset, a time when I came running into the house crying and grabbing at my right ear. There was this awful noise and so much pain caused me to be hysterical. They tried to quiet me but no use. Chased the horse and buggy to Waterloo to see the doctor and with some examinations, he declared that a bug had entered the ear passage. He killed it somehow with solutions I think and the pain and noise came to a halt. I can't exactly remember, but I think he used air and water to wash out a flying ant, he called it. There's not much more to tell about that experience but I remember that going to the doctor took an hour. Mom held me and pampered me all the way home.

I can remember walking to and from church at nite. I don't recall the Sunday mornings, but the nights. In those days it was so dark at nite, it seems to me. As a child it was dark and I held on to Mom's hand 'til we hit the porch. The apple orchard gradually turned into a hog lot and strange noises came from there. The lights in the church were quite adequate inside but when you stepped out the door--pitch dark!! As we walked down the road and got neared our house, one could see the yellow kerosene lamp in the parlor and Dad sitting there reading the papers. The light was so dim and yellow. As you opened the door in the winter, the wind would nearly extinguish the flame sometimes. There were no security lights in the driveway or barnyard, no car lights, just darkness North, South, East and West.

It was a spring nite, not black dark then, as we encountered a mother skunk crossing from Miller's field over to our orchard with the mommy skunk in the lead, the little ones, not like baby chicks gathering all around her, no these little guys trailed along behind her in train-style. Oh how I wanted one of those cute little fellas. "P.U !", Mom would say, "Stand still." We did giving them the right of way. She explained the problem if I had picked up one of the babies. Moms seem to know everything. I learned that but it took me a while. I'd lay on the floor near the

stove and look at the Sears catalogue toy section over and over again.

Millie and I were married March 4, 1939. We had but a few things, but Millie was determined to make the most of it all. There was no electricity at the little farm of Fred and Anna Durst, but we were used to that. Fred had agreed to wire the house and hook into the power line that passed there.

I was busy outdoors and Millie had much to do in the house. I had some chairs and items of furniture that Grandma left to me in her will, earlier. Millie had a few things too. We purchased a davenport and chairs for \$20.00 and began getting things together.

The first thing, Fred said he wanted to talk to me about some oats stored there. He told me how many bushels he thought he had. It took me a while 'til I understood the problem. I said, "Don't worry about that. Grandma and Mom took care of that, I'll not touch 'em." With a loan from Auburn, I purchased a 1930 Ford Coupe from Hap Shepherd at Ashley for \$75.00, a team of horses and related items of Fred's.

We were handicapped in moving in and could make but few preparations for the wedding. Earnest and Dessie Greenfield, Fred's daughter, were living in the house and had no place ready to move to. They assured us they would be out before the wedding and they were, barely. We were there and would carry a chair in and meet them on the steps carrying theirs out. What a day. Millie was particular and wanted it all cleaned and done right way,way into the nite!

The wedding was the following day with family members there from each side. Being married in the house made the event simple and it all went off without a hitch. We went to work the next day. There was work everywhere one turned. Millie was a worker and set out to make the house a home. She did that! There was cleaning and arranging after we were married that we would have done before if we would have had access to the house. March weather was typical with nice moderate weather one day and rain mixed with snow the next. Frequent unexpected visits from Mr. Durst kept one on their toes. His model A had a nasty little habit. I think the fact that he came often and unexpected added to the little annoyance. He drove the model A with the hand throttle set at about

1/3 open. The engine pulled the car at a satisfactory speed, slowing down some going uphill and faster going down. As he approached the drive, the car slowed a little coming up the hill but now to control the car, he would use both feet depressing the clutch with one foot and applying the brake at the same time to slow as desired with the other. As he did depressed the clutch, the engine would race and make the darndest noise. But there was more. He would reach down and turn off the switch without closing the throttle and with the engine turning fast, drew in fuel and it would come to a stop with a loud bang and backfire. How the little wife hated that bang! He'd come at mealtime, in the midst of a project, ready to go to town, or whenever. There were three separate and distinct sounds. They were in this sequence; the sound of a car coming and the slowing down as it prepared to enter the driveway, the multiple sound of a racing engine, the quite moment and then it came -- the bang! --

Sometimes there was another added little sound from the new bride, "DAMN!" Especially if we were sitting down to eat, often she had prepared a good meal, and Millie did, and it would get cold, or if we were painting or varnishing and ready to complete a job, it was like that. I couldn't blame her for she was trying so hard to get things in shape before neighbors, friends and relatives came to visit. Fred was an extremely hard working man. He took great pride in how hard he worked. He meant well in all he did. He wanted to do the right thing. He enjoyed being first to plant and first to harvest. A neighbor told me of one Fall when Fred had cut but a few shocks of corn from a field here and there and was impatient with its delay in ripening. The neighbor was cutting each day at a far end of his field over a hill. When it became evident he had much done and was ahead, Fred cut corn all night long in effort to catch up, quitting only to eat and do chores. He was particular. We husked all his corn by hand and separated it into three different sizes of ears of corn. The seed had to be planted during the right sign and I never knew anything of that. We cut wood by a sign and split and ranked the wood a certain way. Fred was a good honest man and wanted to help in every way, but times were changing.

Uncle John Reihoehl died at this time and I went to the auction sale and purchased the plow and some tools. I purchased an Allis Chalmers W C tractor of Seagley Bros. I dealt with Elmer. He made me a fair price, it was a repossessed tractor, he said, "Take it -- use it. Whatever turns up, call us." They replaced the clutch for me. That was all it needed. It had rubber tires all around. The rear tires had the old fashioned low cleat tread and offered little traction. I rented some extra land that was thin and poor and farmed out, that was a mistake. I farmed Fred's on a share basis and also the same way I rented Vern's farm. Fred and Vern both had a real need for every ear of corn, kernel of oats and forkfull of hay and there were anxious moments when weather didn't cooperate. It took much effort to keep those two happy all the time. I failed on many occasions. Vern tried to help all he could from the welding shop and supplying sharp points to plow with and repaired the machinery.

Charley and Lom Maine operated the old Kroger store in Waterloo on the corner where Sutton's market (now Hart's Super Valu grocery store) came to be. They were good aggressive men and did well for the Waterloo community. They drove the rural route 2 out of Waterloo. At the same time, February of 1939, Glenn Forrest had a Sunday route and his brother-in-law, Ray Sunday, had a route too. I wanted one. I told Dad what I was going to do and talked to Glenn about it. I needed to go to Ft. Wayne for instructions at the Journal Gazette office. They said someone from the community would have to come in and vouch for me or sign some kind of bond. One office worker told us that someone had already been in and I found out that it had been Earl Forrest. When Glenn told him what I had in mind, he went down to Ft. Wayne and did the preliminary requirement for me to get a route. The Maine boys took one look at the old model A coupe I was driving and said they would drive and I could ride the rear seat. Charley drove a tudor black 1938 Chevy sedan. I mean we went! As we approached a paper box, he would set down on the brakes, drive in toward the box and Tom, with the window down, jammed the paper in and Charley was in low gear taking off. I was in the back; up as we came to a stop, down and

back as we departed 85 times at boxes plus hill, corners, bridges all across Fairfield Township and when we got home, I was so sick. I don't know how one could get that sick doing nothing. I thought I'd never make it! Well, I took over after that driving the model A coupe. The week after we were married I took over a Journal Gazette paper route. It meant getting up early to get the cows milked by hand with lantern light, getting all chores done, clean up and be at Waterloo by 6 a.m. to drive the 70 mile route making 85 to 115 stops collecting and delivering newspapers. The first year Millie tried to go along to fold and stick papers in the boxes so we could get home at 9 a.m. and change clothes quickly to return to Cedar Lake Church by 9:30. We went around town east of Waterloo and all south across town again and then northwest through the Smithfield and Fairfield areas. Millie was familiar with the job as Vern had driven a route for some time before this. The car did a real good job for us until one Sunday morning just a half mile east of Dad's place, there was an explosion under the hood. I pulled off the road, raised the hood and lo and behold one blade of the fan had broken off and dug a hole in the radiator. I walked home and got Dad's luxury car, a 1936 Chevy Mater sedan. We completed the route with it. That afternoon I took our car home to see what I could do. The model A Ford had but two blades on the fan, one had broken off and I broke the other one off also. I found a can of iron cement in the garage, mixed it with water, packed it back in the hole. We drove the car for some time that way. Never put a blade on or replaced the radiator. Later in the Spring, Millie said she was anticipating a baby and wouldn't ride the route forever. The next spring after the baby came, she rode the route and we used the Model A but papers and baby altogether were too much. We got a tudor car. We increased the route somewhat and were informed that we had won a trip to Washington, D.C. I had no idea then what that would be like. There was well over 100 others that boarded the train in Ft. Wayne. That was great. The train was air cooled, pleasant and there was much to see. We arrived in Baltimore, Maryland at 2 p.m. It was in the summer and after all those

hours in air conditioning, they marched us out and were lined up beside the hot train in what seemed to be red hot heat to be counted. We stood and stood. Two people were already missing. We nearly fainted. One person did and had to be helped away. They put us on a cruise vessel and we put to sea. We sat six at a table and were served great food. We saw Glenn and Ray after but were not assigned to the same table but I was soon acquainted with the others. Our table was near the rail and as we were in sight of the coast all the way to Newport News, Virginia. We had a good trip. We all six began to eat with gusto. The food was so good and like you wouldn't believe. The bread was sliced, the soup had its own spoon, there were two forks, you could drop one and the waiter replaced it. I had never heard of such. Well, one by one, our six dwindled down to just two. Me and a boy from Ohio. We ate everything they brought but the pay-off was when they came with ice cream dessert all jazzed up with topping. We told them the others would be back in a minute and they expected their dessert also. Of course we never saw them. The other four had left one by one as the ship began to roll and they were gone for good. We sat there, a couple of farm boys, and ate all six of the desserts, one by one. We didn't want any to be wasted, so we ate them all, and lived to tell of it! While walking along the deck near the rail, I saw Ray and Glenn approaching. The next thing I knew, a blond laughing girl stepped up to me up to me, put her arms around me and with a big hug and kiss, greeted me. I was kind of surprised and it took me a moment to catch on. Ray and Glenn took pictures and they turned out real good. I never learned what it cost them but I guess it was worth it all. They sure had fun over it and every now and then they would pull out a picture to show. It was a fun trip and a real good time that was all too short.

One time in Kendallville, our old car stopped in the street -- dead! I was frustrated and had to push it off the street. A man helped me. He said, "You'd better buy you a good car. You need one." I said, "I can't afford a good car." He said, "You can't afford that one, I know." Before we left town, I went down to Johnny Romans there and purchased a 1940 Ford tudor. This car

and I went home. I think it was no more than one hour later that Wilbur was dead. As he was rolling west on U.S. 6 he came upon another trucker along the road with truck trouble. When he encountered the difficulty, he prepared to stop and offer assistance. With his benevolent help to anyone and do anything he could, he lit a flare and stepped out on the running board to set it while the truck was still rolling as he expected to continue the legal distance before setting the second flare. The tractor was a '37 or '38 Ford with a gentle slope to the runningboard from the fender. The runningboard was all iced up from being outdoor the nite before. When he leaned over to set the flare, his foot slipped on the icy running board and he fell to the roadway under the dual wheels of the heavily loaded truck. He died instantly and of course the shock to his family was great. It delayed for some time the cash return for the load of hay but it was paid for later. I was reminded of that boy's tragic death when his younger brother was killed on the farm north of Hudson by a farm tractor. The big International "M" upset crushing Owen Gaetz and while the crew of workers nearby witnessed the accident and rushed to his aid with a hoist, he was dead leaving a young family. Wilbur and Owen were good boys with their only fault being youth and haste.

Ned Sanders, a neighbor boy, came to live with us for a time. He was one of a large family and a pleasure to be around. We couldn't pay him but we did, both of us, I think, slip him spending money from time to time. He helped do chores and, of course, was going to school. He and Barbara became close friends. Barbara was small, I'd guess 4 or 5 years old at the time he came. She liked Ned. He was a clean wholesome boy and the two would do chores together. They would sing if it was cold or hot, dry or raining. They would go to feed the chickens singing "You Are My Sunshine" day after day. Barbara was sharp and Ned enjoyed her and took her along after the cows or to feed the pigs. One time the little pigs got out into the yard and were all over the place. We ran our legs off and got 'em all back but one. Ned threw an ear of corn at it and hit the little guy solid. That little pig rolled over dead. Ned felt so bad. He rubbed it and worked so hard to revive it. I kept telling him to forget

it, it's only a pig and a little one at that, but he hurt over it. He always called me "Boss Man" saying he was so sorry. Later that year we were moving the brood sows and one would not go thru a gate with the rest. We ran back and forth and she would not go through the gate opening. I said, "We'll try it once more". We did and she came past me pell-mell. I was carrying a hammer and swung at her. I must have hit her in the head just right; she rolled over stone dead. Well, Ned felt a bit better then, but I didn't. We had to stop and butcher that day and take the meat to the Hamilton locker.

Kelly, of Auburn, purchased a farm three miles west of us and built a nice horse barn. When completed, he put in 8 or 10 saddle horses. I heard of it and we went over and got the job of taking care of them. Ned and I did that. They paid Ned and he then had an income. He was particular and did it well. He would drive the tractor over and sometimes go on home then to visit his family over the week end. He was a determined, enthusiastic basketball player on the Ashley team. At that time, Ashley played Waterloo, Angola, Hamilton, Auburn, Garrett and such. We all got excited when they won a big majority of games his graduation year. When pitted against larger schools for the local tourney, they won the tourney and came out champions. Well, I told Ned if they won that tourney I would drive my bus to Ft. Wayne Coliseum for the Regional game at no charge to anyone. I did. The poor old bus was loaded to, -- well, loaded and as we neared the Coliseum, a tire blew out. Moments later there went the other one. They spent the day in Ft. Wayne yelling and fuming. I never saw the game 'til I got the bus refitted with two new tires and tubes. It was over and Ashley had won the Regional. It was a great time. Ned was still living with us when we moved to the Albright place. It was Halloween nite and he got ready to go out with some school kids for fun and tricks. I was sure Ned wouldn't do anything too bad and gave little thought. Millie and I slept in the south bedroom which overlooked the vast area of farmyard barn area and driveway and considerable lawn. I was awakened by a clicking sound. I pulled back the curtains and what a sight. The yard was full of images standing still in the yard area. Some were

was purchased on a payment plan with a car payment of \$28 per month. Like kids, we decided we could do it. Upon showing this to my Dad, he said, "You will lose every cent you pay on that car." I never knew if he meant that or if he just said it to fire up our determination. Well, it did just that. Millie didn't take well to that statement so we decided to prove it wrong. I got \$5 each week for the paper route. She would lay it back each Sunday afternoon. We also were getting a cream check of \$7 per week and she would take \$2 from that to make the \$7 per week required. At the four week period she would tear off a coupon and send in the full \$28 payment. The car was not only a good car, it was a great car; dependable, lively, very low upkeep. It provided a very satisfactory, reliable, safe piece of transportation. We drove it well over the 100,000 mile mark. The tires were recapped three times during the war. I don't know who made the tires. The print on the side said Ford tires, that's all. We ran the route until forced to quit by regulation. We were asked, and did, set up the route after the war again. I think we ran it only three weeks, but we did get it going for the company again at that time. They gave me \$1 for each customer. Well, the folks were hungry for a Sunday paper so it was easy to recruit steady customers.

In 1941 on a December morning, I came in from doing chores. It was cold and dark and as I was changing my clothes, I turned on a small radio. I didn't understand all I heard. It was strange. I listened until the last minute and had to leave on the route. I was puzzled. I folded the papers and when I got out south of Waterloo at Albert Weight, he had lights in his barn. I drove out to the barn and he was just standing there listening to the news. I listened a minute or two then he told me he had not done chores, just listened to the news on the radio. It was the bombing of Pearl Harbor. I went on with the route wishing I had a radio in the car that day. I got to Waterloo and when I stopped at Krantz's near the railroad tracks, the girls came out to get the paper. Their father filled me in on the attack as he had been listening all morning. I heard bits and pieces of unbelievable destruction all along the route. It was indeed a strange feeling. To just think that as big

and great as our country was as, we were were taught in the 12 years of school life, that life in this country as we knew it was under such a threat, on this Sunday morning, with ships sunk, men killed and we were at war for survival. It gave me a very, very serious feeling and was the topic of concern and conversation and the future of us all was utmost in people's minds.

Millie and I farmed Vern's place before we were married. I came over and put out a field of corn and milo and I made a field or two of hay. We husked the field of corn by hand, row by row. I stayed there for a time and would get the team ready and go to the field early. Millie would come to the field when she could and husk along with me 'til noon. After lunch, the same way - taking time off only to help Gertie in the house or help with chores. She would come to the field all prettied up smiling and ready to work, but didn't object to a time out now and then for a quick squeeze! We made quite a lot of hay also and stored our share in Vern's barn. We sure needed the money and sold hay in the winter time to Gaulbert Gaetz. He bought and sold hay of all kinds. Most of it was hauled to Chicago and sold on a market there. His son, Wilbur, was near my age and he did the trucking making regular runs to Chicago each week.

Gaulbert and Wilbur came one day to load out the hay. He backed the semi trailer in the barn but left the tractor outside for fear of fire from the barn floor. He loaded the trailer with bales. I carried them from the mow. He was sharp and knew what it took. He made a nice square load and when all finished, he secured it and declared it ready to roll. Vern and Gaulbert watched as he pulled the big load out of the barn. We all looked it over. He seemed disappointed to learn I was not planning to go along. "No", I said. I had so many things to do. He started up and drove out to the road and stopped. I walked out to see what was wrong. He waited 'til I got near and jumped out, "Can't you go along just this once?" Well, I liked Wilbur and enjoyed him and we had fun loading and he wanted to me to go along so badly, but I just felt I couldn't be gone that day and all nite 'til we got back. He pulled out and headed west and down to road 6. Vern went to the shop to work. Gaulbert went home at Hudson

pushing and some pulling by hand my rubber tired manure spreader. They had brought it clear up to the lawn quietly but when they turned the rear wheels, it made a heck of a sound. Now they stood stock still to see if we awakened. I was near the window and when I saw the number of kids, I woke Millie and we watched them. They were sure having fun. Then I saw their cars down along the road. I should have slipped down and got some keys or such but I didn't. I raised the window carefully and when some of them came up near to the house, I said "Can I help You?" Talk about things disappearing. They did!-- across the lawn, garden, corner of field on the road, they used whatever lay between them and their car to go. It was fun. Well, I dressed and went out to see. It wasn't quite as funny then. I learned they had been working for some time before they awakened me with the spreader noise. The hay rack with corn sides on the wagon was upside down on the driveway. I went to check on the bus. It was full of straw all over the floor and on the seats. I carried out much of the loose straw and left the balance for daylight. I backed the bus out and drove up near the overturned wagon. I took a hay rope, threw it over the bus and tied it to the far side of the wagon underneath. I hooked the tractor on the rope and thus pulled the rolled wagon up on its wheels and put it back where it was. The spreader I towed back of the barn, put the bus inside and went in the house. I wasn't fully undressed when a car drove in. A kid from school came to the door. He knocked. I pretended to be dressing as I had my pants on but no shoes. He said he was looking for some Ashley kids. I said there are none here. There hasn't been anyone here tonite that I knew of. I stepped out on the porch and said, "No, looks like everything's O K here. He looked puzzled and went to his car. I shut the door but watched when he opened the car door. I saw the car was full of 'em. The next morning I said, "Ned," he had to grin and couldn't hold out long enough to deny anything. "What did you do with the dog, give him weiners?" No, he played with the dog so much he had come in first and introduced himself to the dog then the rest joined him in the attack. I'll never forget the one who drove in just looking around for the wagon which was upside down in the drive but now

was on its wheels along side of the corn crib as always, the spreader was gone, it was all good fun. I swept the bus all out early before the route again and said nothing to the kids about it. We all enjoyed the show.

GARAGE EMPLOYMENT

29 Years

My employment at G. C. Lepley Sales in Ashley, Indiana began in the winter months of 1949.

I had the feeling I was spending too much time welding either with the oxygen and acetylene torch or the ark welder for the good of eyes and lungs. Conway Rempis, a worker in a nearby factory, was helping me all of his spare hours. He asked to buy the shop tools if and when I was ready to sell. One day I told him I was ready to sell for some \$1700.00. He went to Auburn and by noon the tools were his -all paid for. We had so much work that I agreed to help him clear out the big stuff as he wished to move the shop to his place. I had just taken 12 tomato planters from Libby and I helped rebuild them and a couple more things; a farm trailer and hay baler, that was all.

After unloading students at the Ashley School, I drove on uptown and parked the old bus (I was still driving the 1935 Ford and it was fast becoming out of date) and went to check on a couple of things. I walked into the G.C. Lepley garage. Mr. Guy Lepley was in the front showroom area. I knew Guy from earlier years when Dad had purchased a car there and, of course, my still earlier mishap with the Whippet's front bumper sticking in the bricks of his building. Would he remember that-----? He was smiling and asked me immediately what I was doing in town. I told him that I was looking for a job. He burst out laughing as if I had told a joke. "No, I'm serious. I sold the welding shop last nite and I need a job. I saw an ad last week that Seagley store needs someone to deliver gas cylinders, but I like cars and just thought I'd talk to you first." He said, "What do you have in mind?" I think he was stalling for he said, "I'll bet you are looking for work." "Well", I said, "I am and I'll tell you I'll be here at 8 a.m. and work 'til 3 p.m., six hours or more each day and I want \$5.00 per day.

My time might vary a little depending upon roads and school closing, but I'll be here every day and I don't care what I do, whatever you have, I'll do." He told me to "Go back and see Winnie and tell the boys to put you on the payroll and they'll give you a job." "I'll be here tomorrow." I did not tell Millie and so I must return home. "I'll be here in the morning by 8 o'clock."

My work soon became more interesting when Guy told me to put a plate on the used cars as he took them in on trade. I was to drive them, repair and replace things that I found deficient and what I couldn't fix, tell Winnie. In those early days, Guy would come thru the garage and when I had my head in a trunk or under the hood of a car, he would push something in my pocket saying, "I think you dropped this." I'd wipe off my hands and there would be a \$5 or \$10 bill every time however, kept some increase in pay from the start. In a short time I was helping to recondition used cars and began selling some of them.

In 1948 the 1949 models came out. The 1949 Fisher body was fresh and new for Chevrolets and Pontiacs. The 1948 models were but a continuation of the 1941 and 1942 cars produced with no chrome only painted trim, limited in number and very drab. Then there were no cars produced until after the war. The 1947 and 1948 models were the same car with only cosmetic grille or tail lite change if anything. The Fleetline "slope back" tudor was the most popular, especially by young people while some older family drivers preferred the more square boxy 4 door sedans.

At that time, the car carriers would bring either of these models and the dealer would install any desired items. Not so many on the Pontiac but the Chevrolet base car had very little extras.

It became my job to help on new car preparation. I could hardly wait 'til Monday to get back to work. The cars opened up a whole new world for this farmer/welder. As I was used to working with old, broken, rusted parts and bolts, this was all new and everything went together so well. There was much to learn and the Lepley boys were super people to work with.

I usually got my work-orders for the day from Winnie but also Guy would come thru and

tell me if he had a particular need, too. I enjoyed the work so much. Winnie and the boys were good fun and as a boss was just great. Winnie would help, if needed, or he'd tell me how to do it. He would run in a new car that Guy had sold and put a slip (a work order) on the windshield listing the accessories to be added before delivery. Chevrolet, at that time, installed no "extras". The dealer ordered heaters, (some standard heaters \$39 some fresh air heaters for \$20 more) turn signals, (we'd pull the steering wheel and install the turn signal control then replace the wheel) back-up lites (\$7), bumper guards, windshield visors (outside), radios, (some manual \$39 some push button) rear speakers, trunk lites, underhood lites, mud flaps, gas door guards (\$7), door edge guards, seat covers, floor mats, compass, grille guards, wheel discs, spot lights and outside mirrors, nonglare inside mirrors; these were among the most popular items we carried for Chevrolet. Most buyers had us install oil filters on those engines at that time. Electric clocks, too, became more popular in a couple of years. It seems funny now but one person would desire a clock yet another person would declare that to be silly indeed; a clock in a car!

Guy would give Winnie a list of items for a sold unit and the date of delivery. He would select the car and put it on in a stahl along with the work order under the wiper blade. Now he opened the trunk and placed the radio or heater and all other items needed. When he placed the appropriate things in the trunk and said to me, "There she is. I'll help you as I can," and he did. He would do the hard things and get things going by cutting holes in the proper locations. I liked working with all new parts. I soon caught on to where we were going with each car and truck. The trucks, too, required all items to be installed at the dealership. Now Pontiac installed most of their items at the factory and we only added as the customer wished to for a more customized need. Chevrolet was powered by a 6 cylinder overhead cam engine 215 cu. in. Pontiac used both 6 cylinder and 8 cylinder engines with both 6 & 8 flat head engines. The mechanics did more valve grinding jobs on the Chevrolet engines, but it was a low up-keep reliable engine. The Pontiac engines

Mike Phillipou was also employed at the garage. I knew him well as he attended the Ashley school when I did while he lived at Herman Meloy's. He had Kendal oil for blood, I know he did. Cars were his life. From Meloy's he went to work for Olis Stoy, then went to the service and was injured very badly taking a direct hit in France. He lay many hours in a fence row before he was found and taken to the hospital for care. Back and leg injuries would always be with him. One would never know it to be around him. His back hurt, he wore a brace and his leg was rough and irregular. His delight was his car. At Stoy's he had a new Ford "60", not sure of the year, but they made a choice of engine speed was regularly 85 mph. Also for economy a V8 would do 60 mph. He had a tudor V8-60 and sold it while going to work for Lepleys and ordered a new 1946 tudor black and silver Streak with a straight 8 cylinder engine. All the chrome and mirrors and mud flaps were waxed and hand rubbed 'til you could see yourself anywhere around it. With fender skirts and white wall tires, it was a beauty to behold! His job was to polish, clean and undercoat, if desired, all new cars and he knew how to do it. What a thrill it was for me to drive a new 1950 Pontiac coupe to Kendallville to deliver it to Art Smith, a farmer north of town. It was cream and maroon with leather interior in two tone and all the extras one could get. Mike waxed it to a "T". Guy didn't want to go so he sent me over with it. I thought I'd never see anything like that again. The dash at that time was chromed and maroon color. It was not work for me to make the delivery, it was a privilege and I told them so. Mike had several very sharp cars. The 1948 tudor Streamliner was blue and grey with all the trim also, but some extras under the hood. What all, I never knew, but it would run! It was this car that Mike and Paul Reinoehl we enroute to Detroit to see Mike's sister when Paul informed Mike a cop was after them with a new Ford. Mike decided to out-run him. It was a mistake. Mike cut south off 112 near Irish Hills, took to the gravel at speeds up to near 100 mph, dust like a wall and that Ford kept right up with them. They could see him now and then. They had some close calls with farm units but survived and came out at Toledo. They lost the cop somewhere. Mike

never forgot that. Talk about fright! They were 'petrified' he said.

The 1949 and 1950 Pontiacs were similar cars with only the trim change in appearance. One of the first new cars I sold was a 1950 Pontiac 4 door sedan to our neighbor Charley Metzler. He came in and had me order a most beautiful midnite blue with all the chrome, white walls, visor, wheel disc, automatic; the entire list, power steering, power brakes, the works. The car came as ordered and Mike and I cleaned and waxed and rewaxed that car. Charley came up to get his hew car with one hand all warpped up like a small football. He said he didn't want any driving lesson until his hand healed from a serious cut from the electric saw. I took him and Mrs. Metzler for a ride west of town and back. He said, on return, "Head it toward home and I'll give you a check. Just put it in gear and I can drive it back. I'll call you when I get well enough to drive it, but not now." Well, he did with no more instruction however, I put a slip on the dash with instructions

on the starting and backing up proceeedures. Well, he never called. He began driving and got a real kick out of driving into the church lot where I'd be sure to see him doing it. He traded me an old, old Buick 4 door with a floor shift. The lever worked in big slots in the floor and was reverse pattern of any other car about a 1927 model, perfect inside and out. It brought \$25. It would bring \$20,000 now! After church I asked Charley why he didn't call me as I could show him things about the new car. He said, "I paid you for it, didn't I, so I felt it was mine. I'll just drive it. If I run thru the garage, it's mine, isn't it?"

While Pontiac put less importance on the Indian head, (when their mascot became a drunk with jail time) and more emphasis on extras such as the hydromatic transmission in 1948. Earl Farrington of Corunna, had got the first one before I came to work. In 1950 Chevrolet introduced the powerglide transmission. It was smooth and became a dependable asset. The younger family folk order the "new" automatic transmission but most kids preferred the "stick shift." The older person often had the money and curiosity was slow on the new fangled things. The wife would like it when it was

were quite trouble free and were a bit more quiet in operation.

Factory employees were now enjoying a steady income supported by much overtime during the war years with little shelf articles to buy. Another factor was that many women accepted jobs for the first time which added greatly to the family income and gave women a greater sense of independence and purchasing power. As result of the urgency of the war years and the limitations it brought, people were ready to buy cars and to consider travel and vacation trips. From this overall picture, you can understand the tremendous backlog of car buyers that existed at that time.

At that time, a big change took place in rural areas that we began to realize was an indication of the future. Up 'til now, folks bought a car because of a need. Jobs were springing up and folks had to get to work but all at once the trend changed. As more money began to flow, folks purchased new cars because they wanted one and that person wanted extras such as adding foam cushions to the seats and such. The change came fast as folks received a short vacation from the factory and wanted to take a trip. I remember a popular trip was to drive up to the Straights in Michigan. Lots of folks made Michigan their first trip away from home and from there they became more and more adventurous.

One day I told Guy that my brother-in-law wanted a good used car and he asked me to watch for one. Guy told me Warren Deetz had a new car coming and his old car would be good, clean and dependable. When it came, I sure was happy; used yes, but it had been taken care of inside and out. It was a 1947 6 cylinder, low mileage Pontiac tudor. I couldn't wait to show it to Lawrence Badman. I told Guy of their old car to be traded in. He told me what he needed for the '47. I took it out to Lawrence. He was pleased with the car. It had new tires and was an A-1 machine. I told him the cost and he was happy. He paid me and I took the old car back to Ashley. The next day, Guy looked over the old car and said that the money I had turned in was what he needed for the car I took out. Here I thought that amount was the "trade difference". When he sold the old car, for a forgotten amount, he gave me that

amount! It was a few dollars, but it sure came in handy. Nice things like that didn't happen in the welding shop. In those days if you welded a broken part and it came to \$3.75, that's what you got. Not \$4.00.

The car business was catching on rapidly and the manufacturers began to introduce new innovations. Pontiac offered the Hydramatic transmission in 1948. The first one was a red 4 door sedan straight 8 with a hydromatic that went to Earl and Ada Farrington of Corunna. The garage was selling '49 Pontiacs with the automatic transmission but Chevrolet offered no automatic transmissions until the 1950 model and the option was for a powerglide transmission. When we delivered these cars to some folks, we had to show them how to drive again. Guy sold those cars then but would send me out to demonstrate the safety and convenience of automatic shift or in general, teach folks to drive as the ladies now wanted to learn for the first time. It was fun to teach new drivers and was full of surprises too! I soon learned what to watch for. Some of the men would get the car going and all at once stomp down on the brake as they had the habit of stepping on the clutch they had driven for years. That was always a surprise I watched for, but the wife in the back seat had no warning at all! We always went to an elevation at a railroad crossing to demonstrate the proper stop and start procedure and the safety when done correctly. There were many funny stories those first few years far too many to tell. At first, we had to drive out the second day to see why the new car wouldn't start. Folks would call us because they couldn't start their car. They would drive it into the garage carefully, turn off the ignition and get out. They would leave the shift lever in "D" (drive range) and thus the starter refused to crank the engine. This happened often and we soon were able to tell them over the phone what the problem was. Not all problems were that simple though. There was now no push to start if the key was left "on". I had to show how to rock the car gently in a snow bank, how to keep it from rolling away after parking. It was a new way to drive and the ladies took to it like Christmas. The women wanted these transmissions.

pocket knife, don't give me one with a broken blade. When you give someone something, see that it has value or don't give them anything at all, That's the worst thing you can do. Now think it over, if you think they deserve a gift and seat covers are useful, sit down, order them a good set that is worth while, get that car up here and put 'em on." Never forgot that either. It lasted good!

The garage became a family life and a sprinkle of fun and Jokes run through and through. We counted on DeWayne to supply the original ones, he did a good job. I came in one morning and snuggled up by a heater to get warm. Before I could get to work "Deke", as we called him, said, "Are you cold? Gosh, I've been out starting cars and I'm not cold and I don't even have longjohns on." "I've had enough of you", I said and made a dash for him. He started to run lengthwise of the service area. I caught him before he got to the door and pulled up his pant let and there found big, thick insulated underwear. Mike got a good laugh and often reminded me of that one.

Deke took care of batteries, ordered some new, but mostly he did the installation so when someone came in after a jumpstart Deke got into the battery business. One day he came in carrying a battery he had just removed from a customer's car. The old gent behind, trying to keep up, was somewhat surprised to see Deke tossing his battery high in the air as he walked toward the tester, but what amused Mike was that he was catching it each time and turned to the old gent and said, "Ya' better get ready to buy a new one 'cause this 'un ain't gonna test very good!" His prediction was true.

Guy was not always amused at DeWayne. While he was our formost entertainer, some antics were expensive. Like the time he had a full barrel of undercoat on the two wheel cart running with it to it's place of storage he dumped it off, the pump and hose applicator flew off, the lid came off and a full barrel of expensive undercoat went all over the garage floor. One heck of a mess it was, 3 inches deep and the darndest mess to clean up. When he asked his dad where E-dun, a town in Ohio, was as some truck driver was trying to locate E-dun. "That's Edon, Ohio you dumbell." Guy was out of patience that day (quite a bit)!

I learned only the hard way, I guess. An old lady came in one noon with a Nash Rambler older model, having trouble. The boys were all busy so I went out to drive it. It had a rear wheel bearing out and I told her we could fix it, but Winnie had all the boys on other jobs and besides he didn't want another one of these (types of cars) in the garage to tie up a hoist or area as we kept NO parts for those cars. I couldn't tell her that, so I ran it up beside the garage and removed the wheel, pulled out the axel, went to Angola and got a new bearing. What a time I had. I couldn't ask for help. No one would talk to me. I should have known better. Late in the afternoon I got it together and the darn car wouldn't start. I pushed it out into the street and asked Deke to give me a push with the wrecker so I could start it and get rid of it and never again, never, I kept saying. It was hot, I was sweating, dirty, mad at it too. Well, as I waited around the corner came Fred Ellert delivering his 1 1/2 ton truck. He came along side to see what was going to. I told him I was waiting for a push by the wrecker. "I'll do that", he said. I didn't know he had been in the tavern since 11 o'clock. He put that bumper on the back of that old Rambler and floored the throttle of that big V8 engine. I was trying to start the engine and went north past the alley. The engine started but I couldn't get away from him. More and more speed had me scared. It was a dead end street at the next corner and I was frantic. At that corner I gave a hard cut to the left and slid around the corner on two wheels almost upsetting. I was turning left quickly and sharply. I think I was on the high side or it would have rolled over. He couldn't turn and shot on north to get on the brakes. For years, he had more fun whenever he came in asking me if I had any more cars to push. I wanted to kill him every time!

Millie came up to the dealership and did the bookwork for about 12 years. She came in each morning and worked until all things were posted for the previous day, notarize titles, run the cash register, do the banking, pick up parts or whatever. We had a 1941 Pontiac 6 cylinder getting a lot of miles so in 1950 we purchased a 1949 used trade-in. It was clean and good with 32,000 miles. It had been owned by Bing RhinSmith and was in perfect condition. It was a hardtop coupe and

demonstrated by the husband says, "I can shift the gears!"

When winter came, the garage plunged into red ink, the heat cost alone was tremendous and the loss of time, pushing cars, trying to just help all the folks, single, older folk had so much trouble. Whoever had time ran the wrecker to start cars or get them out of ditches or minor difficulties. Every day it seemed was the same only different names. I had it much easier as I did much of the running to Angola or Ft. Wayne for needed parts. Then, too, I left at 3 p.m. right when they needed everyone, drove my bus home and didn't go back in earlier days.

The new bus acquired in 1951 gave me more certainty of getting home on time. While I had a long route from Ashley southeast into Franklin township, into Water, route two in Smithfield, the 105 hp engine with 8:25 x 20 12 ply mud/snow tires, the 4 speed transmission with 2 speed rear made eight forward gears so snow was not the threat as before--even deep snow could be less a problem because one could now back up when the bus stopped for another run at the snowpile until you came out the other side. There was a heater in front and one in the rear, total comfort, we thought, for those days.

Dean Stoy got a new 1949 Chevrolet coupe. He was clever with the engine and transmission and could do all kinds of tricks, some spectacular, but harmless. He told me he could spin the wheels, bring the speedometer up to 50 mph and be standing still. I didn't believe it. "I'm from Missouri--I've got to see it. Show me." He did. That was a small 6 cylinder engine. We started by backing up quite rapidly then as the car was going backward, he vigorously shifted the steering column hand shift to second gear to stop the gears turning then with little sound quick as a wink into low gear, floored the throttle, let out the clutch! The rear wheels came to a stop but the wheels were spinning forward, tires squeeling. It came to a stop and the speedometer got up to 30 to 40 mph. I had to give him a second chance, he said. This time he did it standing still. The rear wheel spinning at 50 mph. I could have stepped out and should have, but he wanted to take me a little ride. We went west of town 2 miles and back at a rather rapid rate. As we

returned, I looked and thought I saw a police car north at the Hudson corner. I wasn't sure. We got into Ashley and to the garage. I got out and was inside looking out as Dean was sitting in his car radioing, the trooper drove up along side and conducted conversation with Dean.

One great interest of this work at the dealership was the unusual opportunity to meet new people each day. It was intoxicating. One of the earlier experiences I remember was a couple who drove in from Ft. Wayne. Mr. and Mrs. Perry Zahnn, a young couple with little girls, perhaps 2 or 3 years old. They were identical twins and like pictures, they were so pretty dressed alike, acted alike and the father couldn't be sure which was which. The mother could tell. They were fascinating. Guy was away on a trip and they traded me their 1949 Plymouth 4 door for the dark green 2 door powerglide sedan. They seemed happy and so was I. They had such a nice clean low mileage trade-in. He told me that my difference was more than \$100 less than Hefner of Ft. Wayne. All went well until G.C. came home about three days later. As he examined the sale, he called me into his office. I thought I'd get a gold star today. He began by saying he looked over the sale of the Skyline tudor to Zahnn and the Plymouth trade-in to a Helmer man and it looked to him like our profit was out of line. He said in his little garage we try to keep the same margin to everyone. I was shocked and tried to defend what I had thought was so good. I said, "I charged them less than the Ft. Wayne dealer and they are happy. I took off the original tires from the Plymouth and put on new ones and sold it right away." He said, "I think we owe Mr. and Mrs. Zahnn some return. Do you know of anything they need for their new car?" I said, "The girls stand up on the seats, perhaps a set of seat covers. Do we have anything to match or should we order some?" I was anxious to get myself out of there and save my life. I was so sure I'd done well and here I was defending myself. I said, "We have a pair of these cheaper fibre covers that match. They have green stripe and don't cost so very much, I think \$16 or so." Then I learned a lesson. Guy got to his feet, looked at me and said, "Are they good ones? Let me tell you something. If you are going to give me a

served us very, very well. In the fall of 1952, I told G.C. I was going to watch for another good used car. He said, "Sell your car. Order a new car for a change, pay dealer cost and use it for a Demo. So for the opening day, to show 1953 models, I ordered the showday car; a red Catalina sedan 4 door with silver & gray nylon cloth trim, a list of accessories. Well, in those days, the dealership had to sign a paper consenting to hiding the new model (and it was the model year change) so no one could see it before opening day. We received a phone call that the car would come by truck Sunday morning at 10:45, however, it would be unloaded at the corner of State rd 27 and the County line. We were to be there. Millie and I left church early and arrived just a little bit before the auto transport rolled up. There it was, a real beauty. He unloaded right there and I drove about half way to Ashley. Millie then drove the rest of the way and I led her to a garage I had rented to hide it. It was fun. We kept the garage locked, but left a curtain open a little enough to interest folks. In Ashley, a town of 700, word traveled fast. Dola Neidig told me she never had so much company as she did the next two weeks. We enjoyed the car so much, while we had a number of new Pontiacs from then on, we never forgot the thrill of that first car. Wayne and Opal Bowman had taken us to Harlingen, Texas the year before in Wayne's new Chevrolet, so this year we took them to the west coast and related areas. We never forgot that trip. We still talk of it. Within the first three weeks of receiving the new car, we drove to Edgerton, Ohio one Sunday evening to see a movie. When we came out, there was a similar car, model and trim only in black, parked beside our car. They had come in after us. We still liked ours. For such a beautiful car, it suffered bad luck on two different occasions. Once, in the evening as we were going to Ft. Wayne to see the Christmas lights, a young boy, coming toward us, dropped off the shoulder of the road and turned his wheels so sharply to recover, he came across the road putting the grille and headlamp into the side of our car. He had just got his license to drive that day! Another time, I was on the way to Garrett to visit an accident victim and Junior Burns ran through a stop sign in Auburn and struck the other side of that car. I sold the

car and ordered another red 4 door this time a Star Chief model. Some people at Stroh arranged to buy it whenever we were ready to sell. We tried to keep it nice for they had been customers and Jack was a schoolmate. Millie drove it to the Auburn fair taking a load of kids to the parade. The band bunch, I think. While at the parade, she overheard people say that a semi-truck had "run over" a car, a parked car. Yes, it was ours. Seems he was inexperienced and turned the corner watching his front bumper all the way around and pulled the trailer wheels over the rear bumper and trunk area of the new car. There was a note on the windshield and the police had all the information. I called the folks in Stroh to tell them, but they decided to buy the car anyhow in about six or eight months. They drove it many years. Millie felt bad but there was no one hurt only metal and paint. We were able to purchase a car at dealer cost and resell at the end of the year with GMAC 2% salesman interest charge. In 1955 we got a green and white two tone V8 Star Chief sedan. I let Dr. Coleman, from Waterloo, drive it one weekend and he said, "I want one" and that I should come down some evening. I drove down to his office on a nite of no office hours. The office was dark. I heard him say, "Come in." He said he could not turn on the lights or everyone in town got sick. We sat there in the dark and traded cars!

In those days, Eugene Kelley owned the telephone company in Waterloo. It was a local and efficient independent business. The two boys, Grant the younger, and Al did most of the labor, but there was work for all three. They all came to Ashley one day and said they needed a truck, a pick-up truck. The boys were grumbling about the old car/truck thing they had to use to install phones. Their idea was to get a pick-up truck and have a factory "brain-box" put on with compartments to haul all the items. I gave them a good used pick-up to carry their stuff while we waited for delivery. When I got the truck and body all set, painted and ready to go, I drove it to their Waterloo office. It was a great day. Grant and Al were all smiles. Gene seemed well pleased. These are moments of satisfaction. The boys began to separate items from the pick-up and locate them in separate bins for convenience. Gene and I

walked in the office while they unloaded and he started to write me a check. He paused a moment and said, "What will you take for the G.M.C. we're using?" I was surprised, thought a bit and said, "\$1,100.00." He paid me for both trucks, box and all, put me in his Buick and returned me to Ashley. They purchased other units after that. One with a high long armed bucket that was installed at St. Louis. When ready, Grant and I rode the train down there and toured the city for me before we drove the new unit back to Waterloo. I have not had the pleasure to meet nicer folks than they.

In 1954, Carl Walker ordered a cab-over truck, a two ton cap which they use yet to this day (January 1989) 35 years later. He paid cash, as he always did, and told me Paul Smith wanted to buy the 1937 trade-in. I stopped at the Smith's and soon made a deal. He often used this truck and the only thing he wanted was turn signals. We added them and I took it back to Paul. I can't recall the amount, but I believe around \$700-\$900. Mrs. Smith had counted all the needed money, had it spread out in bunches on the table. Paul said, "There it is, it's all yours." I started to pick it up without counting. He stopped me and said, "Never do that, always count money right then. Nothing I know will get you in trouble quicker." I told him I would find it hard to do. I knew them so well and they were so honest and good I thought I couldn't stand in front of them both and recount their money. They insisted. I did. I counted once, I counted twice. They were puzzled, I knew. It was an awkward moment, but I said, "I think there is a mistake here!" "Well," she said, "There could be." Paul said, "We can make mistakes", but he didn't say it convincingly. I said, "There is \$100 too much here." They didn't think so. It was all \$5s, \$10s and \$20s except a little pile of small checks from chickens, eggs and a couple calves. Mrs. Smith had added their column wrong failing to carry a 1 to the second column. It was a lesson that I learned and used over and over.

Throughout this period Millie was driving a lot of miles also. She did the garage running when she could. She was running for Barb, band and music contests, groceries and all in all she did a super job. A close call for her was seldom as she was cautious. Making

many trips to Ball State Teacher's College in Muncie, Indiana on Friday afternoons when Barbara entered college. One day she was on her way home from Ashley. The roads were quite icy and required good judgment. She turned from the Shoemaker road at CR 18 to come west a half a mile to our house. It was about 2:30 p.m. The ice had left the blacktop but the gravel road was treacherous. She came over Campbell's hill and as she approached Wilhelm's she began to prepare for the steep down hill and creek there. As the car headed down the hill, the front and rear got into separate tracks. The solid ice here had thawed just enough to be wet and slippery. She had no control of steering or brakes and the car began to slide completely out of control sideways down the hill, not fast, but may have picked up speed as it approached the bridge. There was a huge cement footing and buttress as you approached. This kept the road and ditch from washing out. The car slid sideways, headed north, right out over the cement, came to a stop with the front end heavy with engine and such, extending out over the creek in a balance. The frame was resting on the cement and the front end over the creek far below. The rear wheels were off the ground. There she sat afraid to move for fear of a fall. She decided she couldn't sit there as someone would surely come over the hill and slide into her and a touch is all it would take to go down. She let loose of the wheel slowly climbed over the front seat ever so carefully into the rear, opened the back door and got out of the car without a bump or scratch. She walked up to Wilhelm's and called the garage to come with the wrecker and then guarded traffic so no one tried to go down the road. The wrecker came, slid the car back off the cement wall and got all four wheels on solid ground. They drove her up to our house 800 feet away. The car had no damage. All I could see was cement and stone scratches on the bottom of the frame, but that was all. Yes, we had a number of close calls in those days, but we were on the road a lot of miles. Millie was driving more than 15,000 each year. I was doing the running for the garage. As Guy didn't go to meetings in Detroit, I'd do that too. One week I ran up there three times to Chevrolet or Pontiac. I figured the miles were near 70,000 per year.

Many trips to Detroit were interesting. They made effort to have good speakers, good music, superb meals and a pleasant environment. We would assemble in Cobo Hall, a new and tremendous facility. General Motors President and Vice-President would speak to us live and were telecast to 17 other locations in the U.S. John DeLorean was a sharp young man and a good speaker. He would come to Ft. Wayne and hold meetings there. He seemed to know every nut and bolt in a car by first name.

In the fall of 1953, Guy rode along to Cobo Hall to see the 1954 model Pontiac. He was so disgusted with the looks and little change that he slept most of the meeting. When the moment came and they would unveil the car, he looked at it from our seat and said, "What I want to see is the one who put that chrome like that on there." It was awful. It looked like they did it with a trowel. On the way home he was relaxing and smoking a cigar. All at once a fire broke out and was blazing up from the rather large ash tray! He put it out as I was taking the curves on 112 at the Irish hills and when he put it out he said, "We'll have no more of that!" I preferred to drive my own car. Much of the time we used the ash tray for gum wrappers, pieces of yarn and candy wrappers making it a great place for a Bar- B- Q pit!

To introduce the new models in those days, G.M. brought a colorful song and dance troop from New York each year. They hired the best they could find. With the big stage facility, they brought color, costumes and music like a Broadway production. They went to great lengths to entertain. It was a big day indeed. They had watchmen at the entrance and used district representatives to guard the door. You wore your badge they sent or you didn't get in. In 1955 they issued no identification whatsoever. We poured thru the door with little hesitation. When the meeting opened, the speaker said, "You notice we required no ID this year. All we did was ask you, 'If you came to see the 1954 model and if you were ready to fight, we said you're a Pontiac dealer -- go on in.'" Attending a July meeting in 1956, we met a President for Pontiac, S. "Bunky" Knudsen. He told dealers what they wanted to hear. "We are going to build a car that young people will buy. You're going to sell Pontiacs to

retired folks as before, but we are going to offer cars for the youth of America", He said. "I can't get it all done by September, but I'll tell you one thing, I've got the stripes off the hood and a live engine under it." The dealers got to their feet. His father was an early President and told the kid if he didn't smoke or drink while in school 'till he graduated, he'd give him a new car at his high school graduation. "It came to pass in the spring of 1941," he said. Two big trucks drove up the driveway at their house and unloaded a brand new 1941 Chevrolet 2 door Fleetline sedan. The only thing, it was in over 14,000 parts. His summer work was cut out. He built his first car. It was all there. He knew cars and was a good speaker.

I ordered a pink hardtop that year with a tremendous engine. When it came, Winnie added some things to it including a spare tire continental kit. It was a fun car and would go like mad too. A young man who lived at Lake O' the Woods named Bob Greenwalt and small boy kept coming in to look at it. I would let him drive it now and then. He said, "I'm going to own that car when you're ready to sell it." I kept it two full years. I didn't want to give it up but we needed a Demo. Greenwalt and his son would drop in just to show me how he kept it like new. His wife, Jackie, told me he was part Indian and had a terrible temper. I never saw that. It was two years ago, or maybe three, when I saw his picture in the paper. His "little" son returned from Vietnam and had shot and killed his parents, Bob and Jackie, at their Lake O' the Woods home. It was a shock.

It was the above mentioned Super Chief hardtop that nearly got me a speeding ticket one nite. Pontiac would hold a party at Windson, Canada, each year in February. I never missed one of those. I didn't think my pay was so great and tried to get all the "free" I could. I would get Glenn Forrest or Dean Smith to drive the bus that p.m. and Millie and I would go to Detroit. The parties were always a great show. Before the entertainment, there was "happy hour." While I didn't care about the liquor, for an hour or so we would just walk around to see things until the big dining room would open. It was always my opportunity to skip the free drinks and be at the door, first to enter the dining area and get a table nearest the

entertainment. That always paid off as our group was by the stage but this time it was only Millie and me. Jimmy Durante, hat and all, was such a good entertainer. He could not be seconded by anyone. We always looked forward to his act. Jane Morgan did an act or two. She had such a beautiful voice and warm personality that made her so admired by her audiences. One time she just got off the plane from Paris where her shows were sold out, yet that evening, she put her heart in singing "Fascination." We enjoyed them all, at least I did. Milton Beryl came to the Elmwood and I enjoyed his show. He's the only one Millie disliked. He was a little overbearing and may have stolen some material; some felt he made a practice of that. Some of those "old time" entertainers that worked hard did a good job and would put their heart into doing their art. Eddie Peabody was called the "King of Banjo" and was recognized by his listeners as the best banjo player in the world. Millie and I, Winnie and his wife were no more than five feet from him as he played the last song of an evening show. He stepped down from the stage to sit on the steps near us and play requests. He did not know that was to be his last few shows of his long career.

Jane Russell entertained at Atlantic City, the Board Walk was a great place in those days with a charge of \$5 on the Steel Pier, one had a full day and evening of shows at no added charge. It was a fun place but now is less attractive due to the gambling.

Frank Fontaine came to Buck Lake Ranch from time to time. Bill Eyster of the Angola Airport would let me know when he was going to be there and we wouldn't miss it. He was so common and clever yet humble. Jackie Gleason never gave him the wider exposure he deserved as Crazy Guggenheim. He began his career by entertaining neighbor kids, then P.T.A.s and so it went.

Red Skelton was a true worker when he took the stage telling of his neighbor in California that let hair grow all over his face yet shaves under his arms. We enjoyed Red and the crowd just went wild to watch him. He made no off-color jokes or references to such. It was all good clean fun.

After contests and special programs, these parties were given in the Spring and Summer as incentives to move products.

These parties were often held in the Old Elmwood Casino in Windsor, Canada.

We were younger, perhaps 40 years old or so, busy and it was easy to have a good time. These meetings ran late and most salesman and wives would return the next day. We would leave around 11 p.m. The Elmwood Casino was just across the river. By leaving at that time, one had no delay crossing through the tunnel and on the road out of Detroit and soon rolling home on a rather deserted highway in those days. February was cold and a lack of vehicles and the urge to get home for some rest in order to drive my bus at 7 a.m. the new car, with abundance of power, gradually increased my speed. About 50 miles out, Millie said, "I think you are driving too fast. Sometime you're gonna get caught." (she was right!) I said, "I'm not passing on a hill or curve, there's no one else out here and I'm watching what I'm doing." I kept right on going. I dropped down over a hill on old road 112 and had a glimpse of a Ford station wagon sitting clear out along the fence headed the same direction as I. After we passed, Millie said, "That's it. You're gonna get it. That was a police car and you are going too fast." Well, I slowed up a little, looked at a speed sign near there and went on. We soon came into Saline, Michigan and as I passed a police post on the east side, there was a patrol car waiting in the driveway. I put on the brakes right there and came to a stop. He pulled out then came up behind me. I was already out of my car and walked back to his approaching car. He wanted to see my drivers license and registration. He said, "Who's car?" "It's mine." (Indiana plates) "What are you doing?" I told him of the Pontiac party and I was on the way home to drive the bus in the morning. "Do you know why I stopped you?" He hadn't really, but I said, "No, I don't for sure." "You were driving too fast." "Well, I've been hurrying a bit. My wife said I was going too fast, but I shone the spotlight on a sign back there that 65 mph and so I guess I thought I could add 5 to that, then where it was straight and clear I added another 5 and then going down hill I picked up 5 or more, but I took no chances on curves or passing." (end of speech) "In the first place, the speed here at nite is 55. Those signs are now being replaced to show at nite correctly. Now, I'll

were two men, no wives. One met me at the door and finally let me in. The other one, smaller of the two, stood in the back door the entire time. I did not seem to get far when I pried into their business as where they came from. One had to go along with me to get plates. I drove the '54 and we returned in a nearly new Plymouth coupe. The little guy came along. He said he wanted me to drive. When we got back, Guy had the note ready. He signed it and said very little. I talked to Guy. I said, "There's something wrong. I don't know what but I must get their plates they are going to use on the Pontiac tonite. I think I'll go to Toledo."

He said for me to go ahead and get them. While they serviced the Pontiac the little guy and I were going to Angola. As we both walked out, Mike was preparing to put the '54 on the rack for lube and oil so I asked if we could drive the Plymouth. I wanted to run it. He agreed. I got in the driver's seat and we started. I didn't go too far 'til I said, "You fellas need a car. This car is shot." I couldn't believe it but it was worn out. He agreed with a nod. As we drove along, I said, "How did you come out here in the country? You men are city fellas. I can't imagine you living out here in the woods. You folks will just die out here in this country. Do you have a home anywhere?" He said he owned a house in Hollywood, Florida. "Where?", I asked. "In the north end." I asked if was near the big drugstore and he indicated it was about a block from there. "How about your partner," I asked. He said, "He has a home in Eurokeka, California along highway 1". "Where along highway 1? I guess I'm nosey". "At the edge of town north along the route." I said, "I know where that is. I've parked there along the cliff before you go into town from the north." "That's where he lives", he said. Well, I drove in to the license bureau and brought the application out to him to sign and got the plates. We talked on the way home. He took the car and went back to the store at the lake. The following Thursday or Friday, we received a call from one of the Smith family to tell us the men were gone; both cars were gone, much from the store and all electric bills paid in were gone! It seems quite a sum of electric bills in that area all come there. All the groceries were sold and none replaced. A sign on the door

said that there was a death in the family and the store would be closed for three or four days. Well, after that period, folks called the police. They went in and saw the result with about four or five days behind already. Here came the F.B.I. They questioned Guy and then me and told us these men were on their 10 "most wanted" list and the little guy was at the top in the USA, was dangerous and fully armed. They found the Plymouth in a parking lot in Kendallville. It was a stolen car and under the trunk mat was 13 sets of different license plates and hotel receipts for room service and dry cleaning. Everything was a paid service. (a nice way to travel!) They chased them for more than a year. They would call us now and then to tell how close they were and then lose them at least twice real close on 'em along the Mexican border. We thought they got across but no, they tried to sell the Pontiac one nite in Florida at a little country gas station. The old gent was suspicious and asked for time to figure it up. He called the police and they arrived just as the fellas were about to pay for the car. Not a shot was fired and they had them both; one a robber all his life and the other a killer. Guy went to Florida, sold the car at auction but didn't get much for it. We felt that was a close call.

The garage was a community gathering place for the men folk in slack periods. They would come in for auto service and exchange information and stories for half a day at a time. Wilmot Hawes provided many extra cirricular activities year round. He and Jim Harris were out on a country road near Hamilton. A freight train had stopped blocking the little gravel road. The men ran out of patience and walked down along the track to make some suggestions to the engineer. They climbed up into the cab. One of them said, "Have you ever thought of moving this thing?" The engineer answered, "Yes, right now." He began moving the train and kept on moving in spite of their protests and carried the men over into mid Ohio. It took them all nite to get back and locate their car. Wilmot and Nole Saunders went to Ft. Wayne. Nole drove his big Hudson sedan. He slid off the road north of Ft. Wayne beyond the Leo road and called a wrecker from town. As they were down an embankment in the light brush Nole said, "Willy, you pay him.

tell you what I'm gonna do. I'll give you this warning. You get back in your car and get warm, you're gonna catch cold. Take it a bit easier thru here and don't get hurt." I said, "I will." I was getting close to 80 or 85 mph! but the worst was "I TOLD YOU SO!"

In 1955, Russ Dunn traded his 2 door white Pontiac for a new one to use on the rural route mail delivery at Waterloo. He got a new one each year, used them hard, made great effort to service and maintain but we often took them to the auction. When Mary Brand called in the mid-week to say they had an auto accident in upper Michigan, I told her I'd run up over the week-end. I said, "I'm glad no one is hurt." G.C. asked who had a wreck. I told him Lloyd Brand wrecked their car and needed a way home. I'd go up late Saturday and be back Sunday. "No," he said. "Go tomorrow (Friday) and take a company car. Take Dunn's car. We will wholesale it anyhow. I've been driving it and I think it will do." I left around 3:30 a.m. and was up to the Straights and got on the 10 o'clock ferry to cross the upper peninsula a two hour run to Manistique. When I got there, Lloyd and Sandy were at the table. Mary was setting things on so I ate with them. I wanted to load up and return before it got too late. "No" Lloyd said, "It's 515 miles back and besides the ferry, we'll show you around and go back tomorrow." So we did. When I returned Guy said, "How's the old car?" I said, "it's a good one. I drove fast all the way up much at 70 to 80. It's a good car, why?" He said, "I'd like you to take it to the store at Lake O' the Woods. Someone purchased Huck's & Steveie's store and the new owners need a used car." Now Huck Smith and wife were great friends of Guy and paid much money to the dealership. Huck had several responsible jobs and was a hard worker, very smart, and could do anything. He worked for the Federal Aviation Board under General Curtis Le Ma and later Elwood Pete Crasada. These men were in the newspaper and radio often. He was in charge of 17 airports along the East coast. Huck got his name from neighbors watching him fish as a small boy. Norman was his name, yet to his death he went by the name of "Huck". In 1952 he got a new car and we did most of the service, however. He was working on a particular job and was assigned to fly every day, all day, nearly 24 hours per day. If one

will research a bit, you find the Lockheed Aircraft Company was building the turbo prop passenger plane called the 'Electra'. It was by far the fastest passenger plane in the air. Recently, three of the planes crash mysteriously. One day he dropped in for a two day visit at home and I asked him if they would ground the plane. "No", he said. I said, "I see the Congress voted yesterday and are considering that." He said, "Crasada may restrict the speed, but he has never lost a battle yet, I don't think he will give in." He didn't give in but did, however, cut the speed. Huck flew one after the other with all kinds of vibration and noise detectors day after day. One plane fell in Texas, I think one in Oklahoma and one fell near Tell City in Indiana. Some witnesses said they saw this one explode! Hordes of investigators visited the sights of all three crashes and asked surrounding folks a sheet of questions. At the bottom was a blank space and they were to write anything unusual that they recalled that nite, anything, no matter what. When the surveys were examined in Washington, D.C. by FAA staff, they found many people of all three crash scenes reported their dogs howling prior to the disintegration of the craft. That broke the case for they knew then that there was a high pitched sound coming from a failure of bearings somewhere and when it let go, the speed of the plane was so great that it came apart. There was no explosion as some policeman had reported. They had witnessed the one when it happened. Huck was written up in a book I read for his efforts. He wouldn't take the time to eat or sleep but drank too much causing lost jobs and an early death. However, at this time his wife sold the store at the lake and the folks needed a car. Guy said for me to go over there when I had a chance and see what we could do. I was too busy that day and the next. The third day Guy said he would go. When he returned, he said he had sold the 1954 Pontiac of Russ Dunn to two men at the store. He said, "I want to accomodate them, for Huck. I told them you would get their plates. Can you do that?" "Well," I said, "The LaGrange office is closed today but Saturday Angola is open but we are not supposed to get plates from another county, but I'll try if you say so." "Wish you would," he said. I drove up to meet them. There

I'm driving." Willy refused and said if he had been at the wheel it wouldn't have happened and if it did, his Buick would have kept on going out in the frozen field and he would have turned around and drove up the bank. "This darn Hudson is low like a sled. No wonder you get stuck every time a cloud comes over the sun!" Wilmot refused to pay so Nole went to the wrecker and paid the bill asking the driver to stand by and wait right there. Willy was in the car. Nole got in and started backing down the road. No explanation. He got the Hudson running good, came near the wrecker, then he pulled the big car off the road, down the bank, through the lite brush, out in the field, made a roaring circle and came head first up the bank and made it back onto the road. (these were adult? men!) I often wondered about the driver of the wrecker that nite telling his wife, "Myrtle, I tell you, today I -----"

In 29 or 30 years 300 days a year one could not begin to relate the things that went on. The stories alone here would make a huge book in itself like the time I was riding with Charley McGrew, the senior mechanic at the garage. He was driving and old, old 6 cylinder Oldsmobile, a real dog of a car, worn out, that was owned by someone near Angola. He was just trying it out for problems when all at once we heard a fire siren and were were a half mile north of town. He stepped on the gas. He was Firechief! We raced into town, slowed down at the corner and learned it was the transmission of the car we were hearing. It beat Charley to be taken so. And the time Deke took a carload of employees fishing one evening after work. On the way to Turkey Lake, he was driving across the woods and field following a dirt driveway as fast as the old car would go, holding some poles out the wondow with his left hand for fear they would come lose. With one hand steering, foot down on the accelerator, he took a short turn and came to a small hill. Winnie, one of the four in the back seat was trying to smoke his pipe calmly said, "Deke, if you get to some place where you can slow down -- let me out!"

My first day of work Winnie said, "Take the clock from the Chevy. It don't work, tag it and I'll send it in." I disconnected the electric wire to the lite and the one to the clock terminal, it was a dead one, tagged it,

laid it upon the work bench, installed a plate to cover the hole and then saw the clock was running and it kept on running, unhooked! I called Walt over. "That electric clock is running now laying there. I don't get it. It's electric, isn't it?" He got a good laugh. "It's only electric wound and evidently it was loaded for a cycle and removing it got it going" but he got a good laugh on me.

In 1956 I sold a new Chevrolet station wagon to a new owner of the Helmer Hardware. Clarence Fehling was from Ft. Wayne and seemed like a swell fella to know. The wagon was two-tone green, white walls, roof rack, V8, a good looking unit. Both he and the garage were proud to put it on main street Helmer at the new hardware. The second week after delivery he called me one morning to talk to me about it. Early in the conversation I said, "How do you and your wife like the wagon by now?" "We like the wagon real good and it likes us", he said. I was puzzled and said, "Clarence, what do you mean it likes you?" He said, "It followed us into the house last nite. We came back from Ft. Wayne and I parked up on the hill there behind the store. She took an armful of stuff in, I grabbed a load and followed her. We just got up the stairs and Ka-Boom! 'ya better come over and look at it." Well, he had door and siding to replace. We had grille, hood, head lamps and stuff to order and repaint.

In 1951 Cecil Lepley, brother of Guy, had a little trouble to decide which of two sedans he wanted. The two sedans were alike except color; one black, one grey. He chose one, drove it a few days, came in and paid for it and brought the title and papers to the trade-in. He drove away and just north of town he failed to see a train. The car was struck so hard, so violently, the door came open and he fell to the ground by the tracks. The car was rolled ahead of the train. It was only junk. All he received was a scratch on his wrist bone. He took the other car after all.

Don Cool did the same in 1949 when the brown car was totaled and came back and got the green one.

In 1959 Chevrolet came out with a new model car and was going to sell it in '59 & '60. Around opening day I gathered up material, engine, body and related material and took it down to Clark Kelley at the Waterloo Ford garage. He gave me similar

material of the new Ford and we exchanged prices. I looked it over right then and there and found only \$9.00 difference in price of the 4 door stick shift sedan. I said, "How can two companies buy all these materials, assemble these two cars as differently as these and come up with a price of only \$9.00 difference?" "Simple", he said. "They all sleep in the same bed." I began to believe it. In those days they held comparison training schools for salesman. Those were interesting sessions. Chevrolet Zone men would select a dealership in Ft. Wayne and they would borrow a new Ford, a new Plymouth and used a new Chevrolet similar model to compare. One Zone rep would station himself at his selected car and they would take turns of going thru material concerning the trunk area, engine, seating and leg room, dash, head room. This was an all evening meeting. The next week it was trucks, drove the same way comparing cabs, boxes, brakes, engine and component parts. This was every year and sometimes mid-year too. They did not make a practice of saying their unit was greatly superior, if that was true, they said we wouldn't be out here. We think ours is superior here and there and we want you to know and understand the competition. Then they would lend a Chevy to the Ford dealer for his training and evaluation. Now and then we would be called to the proving ground. This was always an informative day. I saw new pick-up trucks running around a track over rough roads with a load of lumber extended out over the tail gate. They would hook but one chain on the tail gate to support the over load. Ford, Chevrolet and Dodge trucks driven around for 6 hours, measure gates and boxes and change drivers and go 6 hours more. Chevrolet cars with Ford transmission mileage checks, Chevy transmissions and Ford engines hooked up. Foreign cars were there also but I never saw them run. New innovations were tested. They introduced an additional transmission in 1957. To show how reliable it could be under rough use, they took a new, brand new Bel Air sedan so equipped with V8 engine from several on display and drove out on the test track in front of our grandstand, pushed the throttle to the floor and the wheels spun so fast it scarcely moved. As it did begin to move forward, the operator flipped to

reverse until it began to move back then again forward with the engine at full throttle. Sometimes the smoke obscured the entire car. When it was driven back to the display, the new tires were smooth as butter; all tread was gone in that brief demo. They one time demonstrated a little Nove coupe with a hopped up 427 cu. in. engine. A gas turbine semi truck combination.

In 1960, the division produced a small economy car with an air cooled engine mounted in the rear. It was too radical for our customers. It looked to fragile for the mechanics to have faith and salesmen were afraid to sell it for fear of trouble and come-backs.

Chevrolet decided they would call all dealers to the factory to see the car constructed and proceed to sell the dealer so he, in turn, would sell the car. Our Zone Rep told me I would appreciate the car after that trip. He told of things I would see. One I clung to was his statement that two men would be installing the windshields in each car as it came down the line and do it in 11 seconds! I wanted to see that. (I'm from Missouri and lack imagination. I have to see the things I don't believe, I guess!) I remained at that station after the group had moved on, ready with my watch. I checked them, car after car. They did not do it in 11 seconds. They were doing it in 9 seconds! We all had somewhat more confidence after the day there but the car had oil leaks and other problems and folks cared little about economy then. The car was the Corvair and lasted 4 or 5 years.

Gasoline was not a great expense and as the youth were able to obtain greater income the trend went to performance cars. We sold the Pontiac GTO models, the small car with tremendous engines; 389 cu engines with 4 BBI carbs or with three carbs capable of great speed and acceleration. We always had the fear of a terrible wreck with the youth taking chances as they were, but we were spared of that.

We delivered one to Danny Gaetz. He was capable of demonstrating it on occasion. His father went to include it in his insurance. When he learned the cost, he was angry with Dan and me. Someone came from his tavern hurriedly to tell me Joe Gaetz was coming up to see me soon and was mad. They said,

"He's going to really go after you." I didn't have long to wait--here he came. I let him tell me all about it, what a good driver Dan was and mad because of the car being a performance machine. I listened a while and he stepped up criticism of the car insurance, garage and me and my dander arose. I stood up and said, "Joe, I've heard enough about the \$300 insurance cost. Now I want to tell you something. Listen to this. I see your checkbook in your shirt pocket. I want you to try something. Write out a check to me for \$1000.00 and lay it on this table and see if I will touch it to guarantee to cover any and all that Danny may do with that car for a year. I will not touch it. Then put another one on top and see if I touch that. I wouldn't take the \$2000.00 and tell Millie to put this in the bank 'cause I'm gonna cover Danny Gaetz driving for a year--not on your life. Try me and see. That insurance company will do that for the \$300 because of customers like Alva Duncan and Charley Schweitzer." He went and paid the \$300.

There were many replacement transmissions, gears and automatic transmission failures during that time. Some were unnecessary and the result of misuse. Those stories would serve no purpose and take up time and space. I will relate one after all. Lynn Noll, of Stroh, was a good clean, wholesome boy who worked hard, quiet by nature, but liked fast cars. He cared for them well, was not rough but did like the speed and get up and go. Lynn ordered a 1963 Grand Prix, red with all white vinyl trim, bucket seats, center console with 455 cu. engine, high lift cam and three carbs. These Tri-carb combinations were popular. The car had electric windows and about all Pontiac could think of. Lynn got the car on Saturday and was proud of it as we all were. Mike had it waxed and it was a show piece. The next week, the wrecker towed it back to the garage with engine failure. This was very unusual. We were all sick and of course there was a steady flow of curiosity seekers. Charley tore the big engine apart piece by piece and examined each one. About the second day or so I went out and asked Charley what happened. He showed me a small battered ball of black metal. "What is that?", I asked. He got his magnifying glass. "I think I see threads in it, you look." I saw

traces of lines real small. We called Lynn in to talk about it. We learned he had removed the large air cleaner that served all 3 carbs. When he did so, he dropped a wing nut down into one carb and installed 3 small chrome individual air cleaner units. He started the engine and all went well until he got out in the country and opened the throttle wide. The wing nut was drawn into the manifold into a cylinder. The piston broke trying to crush the intruder. The engine disintegrated. Winnie called the Pontiac Zone office and they shipped a new engine which cost altogether \$1000.00. Lynn paid for new oil and new filter, his only cost. Lynn holds a very responsible job at a bank now--a lesson learned there.

Herman Meloy, a hard working farmer now retired, spent some winter months in Florida. Mrs. Meloy died and Herman was trying to keep going back and forth as he had rented his fields and nothing to do during winter times. One spring he came home with a wife. She was a much different lady than his first wife. She placed more emphasis on dress appearance and was outdoors very little and appeared to be a city person with little knowledge of rural life. Herman had developed problems with his legs and had trouble walking. This progressed to where it effected his driving. It became well known Herman would slow down at intersections but not slow enough to require shifting gears and stay in high gear at stop signs. The big gray Buick was known throughout our community. He called the garage one time during the summer of '53, I think, and needed help with his car. It was a dead battery or some little thing. He told the boys to have me stop on the way home that evening. I did. We discussed the car and made arrangements to repair it. Not long after that they called again. It was the new wife and she asked me to stop again on my way home. She then insisted they wanted to talk to me about something else and she would have supper ready and wanted me to plan to stay for supper. We ate supper and they told me they had talked of a new car, perhaps a new Chevrolet with an automatic transmission, so Herman could operate it better. By now he seldom got the car out. I had dropped off some grocery items when the need was such and Mrs. was telling me on the quiet she feared to ride with him and was not

going to town anymore. By now, the 1954 models were out. I figured a Bel Air 4 door with powerglide transmission and moderate accessories. We had a blue one. We always had a blue one and one sunny morning I drove out there. Seems it was much like her own little Chevy in Florida. She adored it. Herman wasn't greatly impressed, the name hurt it to begin with, but it drove very nice. He could see out of it well, he enjoyed the "no shift" part. All in all he said they wanted to buy it. He said if worst came to worst, she could drive it better. How much? There we hit a snag, in fact a big, big snag of \$200.00 I recall that very well. We had a big difference of opinion on the worth of the old Buick. I went back to Ashley and told G.C. "I didn't sell the car." No, I didn't think you would. We discussed the figures and he said to forget that. There is no place to go with that old car." She called me or I stopped a time or two and explained that our little place could give no more on the Buick. Several days or a week went by, maybe even more. Well, out of the clear blue sky, she called one day and asked if we still had the car she had driven. "Yes." "Well, get it ready. We are going to get it," she said. "I'm going to pay the necessary \$200. Can we get it right a way or tomorrow?" She said she just wouldn't ride with Herman anymore. She was so desperate as she had gone along to Auburn and, as was his custom, he came over the hill quite fast, I guess, and shot across road 6 without stopping. (If you cross fast, your not exposed out there long) She was scared to death. I don't know how close, but there were cars coming. We got the Bell Air ready and then she called again and said to make the papers out as if we allowed Herman the \$200 more he insisted upon so he would be happy. She said it was all her idea and she would do this, pay the needed \$200 so she could drive and be safer to go to town as need would arise. I think she was going to tell him it was a gift to him on the upcoming anniversary or birthday. Anyway, some date of when they had met in Florida for it was soon time to go and she wanted to get used to the car. Well, I made her an invoice as she desired that reflected the incorrect figures and also made one for us which showed the proper figures and indicated the \$200 cash she paid along with what he paid. I thought it was strange,

but we had the money, she had the car and they were going to be safer on the way to Florida so we were all happy and we could get rid of the Buick now at that figure. Keep in mind they were still in the honeymoon time, or so it seemed. We sat around and talked of how to register the car. This made no difference to me. I had the money and said most of the cars are in both names but I'd do it any way they wanted. I think she wanted it in her name and that was all right with him. He didn't care, so we did it that way. With only little instruction and a few miles of driving that seemed to go so well, they called to say they were leaving early for the Florida home. I think they lived in her place. This was like November of 1953, I believe. The time went fast. I gave little thought to the whole thing but did get a card about a week after their departure to say they had a pleasant, safe trip and they enjoyed the new car. The next thing I knew, it was May 1st and I received a phone call from Herman informing me they had seperated. She got a divorce and worst of all, she kept the new car. It was in her name and she informed him she had paid some of the cost, (the \$200). She had never told him as she had expected until now! He wanted me to stop on my way home. Well, I ran right down there and talked to him. He said he would get a lawyer and sue me and the garage and get a new car that was owed to him. I told him, "The garage does not owe you a car. If I do, I'll get you one somehow, but I'll be thinking that over first." Well, he said he was going to start action right away as he had need of a car. Now being neighbors all my life and on occasion I worked for Herman, I gave this considerable thought. A few days later while in the license bureau getting plates for someone, I thought I'd talk to Judge Stump. He called me in his office immediately and heard my story. He asked one or two questions: "Was there any indication of mental instability?" "None, only in love with the new bride, that I could see." "Did you threaten him to sign off the title to the old car or give him a drink?" "No, I didn't." "Well, give it no more thought, if you discussed the action, with exception of the two hundred dollars, there is no problem. As far as the two hundred dollars or the car in her name, neither are of any concern. When they married they became one and the

purchase of the new car was by the married couple. The \$200 is nothing." Do you know, it was less than a week 'til I heard Mr. Herman Meloy was dead. I know what you are thinking, but no, I didn't. I don't remember what he died from now. Some distant nieces who once or twice came to visit called me to be a pallbearer and I agreed willingly. I am ashamed here to admit when we lifted the casket up into a crypt in the Waterloo Mausoleum, I took a long breath and thanked the Lord. I hope the Lord didn't step in and shorten his life for me, but if he could see only trouble ahead and just thought the time is now, well, that's OK. It was strange because I never heard from the wife but I'm guessing she might have had something in mind last summer, 36 years ago!

A strange couple walked in one day to buy a new car. They were only in the area for a short time at one of the lakes. I think they lived in Ft. Wayne. The man was very ordinary looking and his wife was very attractive and had an air of sophistication about her. We soon agreed on a car and price and while the boys got the car ready, we had an interesting time visiting. She excused herself and went out to their car to get the title and papers from the glove box. He quickly told me she used to sing for Arthur Godfrey for several years. He said she was pleasant like that all the time and very talented too. I could have guessed for her conversation reflected great care and training. He said her only fault was one he wondered if he could take. She was a perfectionist. Everything had to be exact as it should, down to the smallest detail; the silverware setting, the plate so far apart. If he removed a pair of shorts from the drawer, she opened it and rechecked for perfect pile and separation; a door, picture, parking the car it all had to be just right, everything was that way. He did express doubt he could take it, and he said she would never change. I said she was so unusual in appearance and so pleasant. "Yes", he said "She is that way work or play." She returned and we visited. I really did enjoy them. He gave me a brochure of the Club Olympia in Ft. Wayne. They had her pose on a diving board about to dive in their pool. She laughed at that because she couldn't swim and didn't care for

water that much. I never saw them again as they traveled the U.S. doing commercials.

One day a bum walked in, sat down outside my office and waited while I finished with a family in the my little office. I saw him out there in the waiting room when I had Bud sign some papers and wondered where he came from and who and what did he want here. I did hope if they were repairing a car he might soon leave. He never told me he was waiting to see me. He walked in the office and sat down and I began to wonder. Then he said, "I want to borrow a car." We sat a little bit and I began to stall. He broke into a hearty laugh. I was puzzled. He got up, turned around and closed the door, the only door, then sat down again between me and the closed door, wiped his whiskers and said, "I don't think you know me, Gene. That's funny, I know you." Then he told me he was Donald Hampshire who lived in Fairfield township and went to the Ashley School. He was now doing undercover work and was a trooper with the Indiana State Police! I couldn't believe back of that brush and hair could be Don Hampshire. He convinced me and had fun with his disguise. He needed a car now and then to infiltrate drug gangs and what he needed was an old car with good tires and dependable running qualities for use over a nite time. He would call a day before. I'd pick out a car that I had confidence in, set it in the selected location near the garage, lock it up and put one set of keys on top of the left rear tire. We kept a second set in the garage so when he returned the cars, he could lock the keys inside. When I'd ask him what he was up to, he'd always say, "Watch the paper." I did. It was interesting to guess. The department furnished his gas and he always left more than he took, had his own license plates, rusty bolts and all. These old cars were not used to chase or out-run. They were only used for tickets to get in some place. Don had a very, very close call on a chase one nite from Michigan down I-69 and speeds got up pretty high and the station wagon he was following realized they were being chased, lowered the rear window of the wagon and began firing at Don's car. Before he backed off, he took shots thru the windshield. Flying glass, injuries, speed all at once was too much. He lost the chase car on the bridge east of Ashley. It got completely out of

control and went over the bank by the railroad. When he regained consciousness, he crawled up the bank to the highway again and managed to get a car to stop. They got help. He was laid up for a while and later he disappeared. I think they moved him out of the area as they do sometimes when things get too hot. It was a bad wreck and he was fortunate to survive it.

I had many opportunities for good jobs here or there and know very well now, I should have grabbed one. I think because I liked the life of school involvement with young folks and those experiences so much and then the garage afforded me opportunities to meet folks, new things almost daily, trips and sightseeing, contests and prizes so all in all I passed up all the efforts some went to trying to get me a good job that would pay more money and less fret in old age but I didn't see it then.

Around 1952 or soon thereafter, a rather young man walked in dressed well, impressed me with his conduct and introduced himself as Carl (I can't recall the last name) from Southern Indiana. He said he'd been successful in signing a contract with the Hamilton School District to be school Superintendent. He said he had school expenses yet to be paid and while he had good prospects here in this area, he had no money to move up here. He said he was so desperate to come quickly with his wife and small child. It seemed to me he couldn't borrow where now lived with no collateral and leaving town, he couldn't borrow up here. No one heard of him. He didn't want the school board members to know and someone sent him to Ashley as he told them of his need of a car. Well, I didn't have a cent, it seemed, but could get money. I told him I would go to the bank at Waterloo tomorrow morning when it opened and sign a note for \$300 borrowing it for six months. He could drop by at 10 a.m. and pick up the money and return to down state location. I did so and called later that evening to see if he got his money. He had done so. He brought his family to Hamilton soon and became a great asset to the school and to that community for many years. We never talked of this incident again. He paid all the note early. He was a conservative man with family expenses like everyone else. He purchased a new car or two from us but did

something much greater. He spoke well for us in meetings, conversations and encouraged teachers, especially newcomers, to go to Ashley for cars and service. We met and enjoyed some great people as result.

I'd say among the greatest was Richard Norris for music. He was a great music teacher, fresh and new from school and did a great job. He was proud of his wife and children. Years later, he did music for DeKalb and I'd see him often, in fact it was there his wife died of Cancer, a crippling blow to Richard.

There were great experiences around the garage those days. The Hamilton Schools hired a number of young men. Ronald Vaughn was one. He seemed to head up about six of them and bring their cars over for service. They were young, had good jobs and were interested in cars and darn soon they would be buyers, I knew that. In those days, the young teacher regarded his student loans seriously and new cars came after the loans and family needs were taken care of.

One time Guy traded with Carl Swank at the funeral home. He took in several units and one of them was the Packard funeral car. We had so many used cars right then, but Guy said maybe someone would come along, we'll see. They did. A couple of the young teachers from the Hamilton school dropped in. While Mike serviced their car, they were in and out of every new car we had. They talked from station wagons to 4-speed cars when their eyes fell upon the funeral car. Now that Packard was a gem of an automobile with stretched wheel base, and clean and shiny as brand new, all new tires with rather low mileage. Ronnie Vaughn seemed to be the spokesman and said, "How much money here? Now I mean cash and no trade. Figure it out." I think I told him \$250. Well, could he drive it? We hit a snag. I agreed to it just up the road and back on the blacktop not on the gravel or over to Hamilton. "OK" He drove it a little and said, "We will be back and see you tomorrow." The next day was Saturday. Here they came, the four of 'em. Now they all wanted to drive it. "What do you guys want to do? I suppose go to Chicago to a ball game over the week-end or ride around for fun? We can't do that. No deal. Now what's on your mind?"

"We want to buy it. We're gonna buy it. We got the money with us. \$250, right? Let's get to work." It was fun, believe me. They were so charged up that morning like highschool kids at a ball game. Seemed there were five of them with money. Only four came as one was absent but sent his \$50 with Ronald. They explained they were going to take more schooling at Ball State Teacher's College in Muncie and would drive back and forth from home twice per week after school, which was a distance of 90 miles. This long stretched funeral car with extra seats would be just the thing and was here at the right time! This Packard built limo, so to speak, had tremendous driving and handling qualities. It had all new big, big tires, quiet straight 8 cylinder engine, shiny paint, spotless interior, like new. The boys couldn't wait to get their hands on it. They paid me. They didn't have time to sit down, just "give us the title and we'll get going," they said. "You must decide how you are going to register this machine. It's not that simple. They had given that no thought. They were stuck. There was a little delay here. They may have ran back to Hamilton, but decided to register it to this name--The Packard Club by Ronald Vaughn, president. They went for plates and in no time they were proud owners of an expensive machine. It served them well trip after trip. Some could sleep, some could play cards. It was a perfect unit for them for a time. One time as we were servicing the unit for them, one told me that another member was using it as his second car at home and drove so carelessly and had a couple of close calls while using it for the family. "How would that effect us?", was the question. I told them each member of the Packard Club was responsible for that car no matter who was driving in the event of a mishap and injury with liability belonging to each member, regardless. They disbanded the club right then and sold the car.

Guy Lepley had a good sense of humor and was capable of teasing or being teased and those two alternatives brought many laughs to those of us near by. He did especially like to tease Shell Lepley, a quiet brother.

One time Sheldon came to the garage and, as always, was serious and not interested in bantering around. It was the last of February and a farm sale was coming up to sell Charley

Albright's possessions. Now among those items was a 2 ton Chevy truck; cab, chassis and flatbed. Shell was interested in it and wanted to hear us say a proper price to pay for that year and model. Guy just passed it off and told him to see me. I heard that and proceeded to figure and think so when he came, I acted a bit surprised and said, "Just off, I'd say \$650, I think." Well, he bought it that day and came back to tell us, but what was on his mind was that this being March 1st did he own it and was he obligated to turn it in to the assessor for tax purposes? Now Mr. Shell was 101% honest but counted each penny to make sure it served a good purpose. G.C. went straight up, "Why, of course you owe the tax on that truck. You can pay it, Charley Albright isn't going to!" Guy kept going, "It's folks like you that don't pay what they should that make my tax so damn high, always looking for a way out."--And so on. I felt sorry for Shell. He only asked but Guy need to hit on someone (all in fun). Shell walked in and got a lecture. Finally Guy ran down and Shell said, "I just wondered, I'll turn it in." He did and drove the truck for years hauling livestock to market for the neighbors. On sale days he would leave before daylite and come home late that nite. He loved every minute of it and did that work as long as he could drive.

In 1951 or '52, a brother, Herb, died in California. Shell, Guy and Cecil decided to take the train to attend the funeral. I took the three to Garrett to board the train early the next morning and saw them pull out. Upon their return, I got this story. Keep in mind now, Shell was so close with his money and was influenced by that. -- At breakfast time, they were served and the waiter brought the bill. Guy picked it up saying, "I'll get this one" and stuck it in his pocket. He paid it and nothing was said. Now noon came. After this meal Cecil picked up the check and said, "I guess it's my turn." He paid that one. Now the evening meal came; a larger meal than a coffee, roll and egg breakfast or a lite lunch. This was a full meal. Shell picked up the bill and couldn't believe what he saw. He studied this with concern as Guy and Cecil exchanged glances and containment. No words were spoken. After a period of time, Shell went and paid this bill, said nothing at all and all went to

bed. The next morning came. They were out West and time for breakfast. Again, Cecil said, "I'll get this one." At lunch Guy picked up the noon check and just at that point Shell knew what would happen again. The next morning, after getting caught twice with big bills, when the breakfast bill came Shell quietly said, "Here, boys. I'll tell you what we best do with these!" Well, Cecil and Guy had some good laughs at Shell then split up the cost equally instead of Shell paying twice as much as he had twice before.

In 1952 Shell became intereted in a new car and Guy traded with him. He ordered Shell a new tudor, powerglide and traded for Shell's old Plymouth coupe. The new car came in during January and the weather was bad. Shell would come over and look at the new car but wouldn't take delivery until the roads got better. He talked Guy out of switching cars for a couple of weeks. Guy got mad and said to us, "The next time he comes in, I want those plates changed and he takes his new car. I'm paying interest on that car." Well, he came in and Guy was gone. We didn't get the job done. He said the because of the automatic transmission, it being a new car, the snowy roads and all that stuff, he wasn't ready to make the trade. He went home once more with the old Plymouth. Well, when Guy heard Shell was in again and didn't take the new car, he was mad. "I'll set a trap for him the very next time," and he did! It was some time before Shell came in again but one day he drove up. "Well", Guy said, "This is it!" Guy slipped out the back office door and collared Deke and told him to get the plates off Shell's car, clean the trunk and put the plates on the new car. Shell came in the office as Guy re-entered. Guy said, "You're after your car today, aren't 'ya?" "No, oh no, Guy. I'll tell 'ya when these roads clean up and the weather settles down, we'll be over and..." Guy interrupted him, with contrast to Shell's quiet voice, "Hell, I've heard that story long enough." "Hold on, Guy," Shell said. "I don't want to drive the new car on this snow and salt ice." Shell turned to Deke, "Don't change the plates yet." Guy got to his feet. "Deke, do as I told you and get those plates off and put them on this Chevrolet right now! Shell, the roads seem to be good enough for you to drive my car around on the ice and I think it's time for you

to drive your own. You don't seem to mind driving mine so now, drive your own." They settled up and away they went. Guy spent the evening showing him how to drive and they had a good time. They were great people, but Shell was so tight and so sincere it made such good fun for Cecil and Guy. They couldn't pass up a chance to heckle him.

In 1952 Delbert Clark called one day to tell me his wife, Evelyn, had met another car on a narrow bridge just west of Auburn. "The other car went over the bank and into the creek. An older couple were in it but escaped injury but the car was lost and all possessions were gone. The wife remains in Souder's hospital but the Mr. is out and Ok. They need a car." He said the couple purchased a new car before they left Florida and now it was gone. He said they had contacted Rohm Chevrolet dealer about a new car but felt someone had lied to them and the man was walking yet and might walk back to Michigan before he would buy a car there. He said he didn't know whether they had lied or not, but the old gent thought so and that was enough.

I drove down to the hospital and met Mr. and Mrs. Joe Hamman. He was an Indian and she was Scottish. They were a bit different, but good folks. We talked in the hospital a bit. She had been in the hospital three days and expected to get out in a day or so. They held no ill feelings toward Evelyn Clark, just how it happened, I don't remember, but the new car went into a greatly swollen creek. They crawled out of the sinking car and gout out on the bank. The car sank and went down stream a bit as result of recent flooding. With Delbert Clark recommending us at Ashley, Joe and I hit it off quickly. He and I went back to Ashley and I had a like car and in less than 2 hours, Joe had a car and was going to return to Auburn to see his wife. Joe was a very sincere man and contrary to Indian culture, was a hard worker. They used our dealership as a central point for the insurance settlement. They were at the dealership several times. We became good friends. Millie and I both enjoyed them and agreed to visit them at their home in Michigan later in the summer. The insurance agent who was going to settle for the car and belongings was from Woodburn. I knew him and admired his work on other mishaps. He was as fair and

the best time of their life now. Mrs. Barkdiell had been writing to her friend telling of the progress and invited them to come and see it and visit with them on a particular Saturday. The Dr. found time to comply and said they would be coming and would arrive before noon on Saturday. Mr. & Mrs. Barkdiell made great plans to feed them in picnic style, first meal, first visitors in their new house. His wife was so happy as the day came. They went out to the construction early Saturday to sweep and pick up 2 x 4's, tools, paper and such. They set up saw-horses for a table and blocks of wood and such for chairs to accomodate them. While they were working, he was listening to the radio and heard a break in the program to announce a plane crash in Ohio had claimed the life of Dr. so and so and his wife. He was stunned but couldn't be sure so he did not tell her at that moment. He did, however, make it a point to listen at the next newscast and she heard it also, or he told her then, I think she heard it. She could not speak a word. She never spoke a word after that moment. His wife developed a blank expression, made noises when she felt needs, but could not say one single word. While her mind snapped instantly, she continued to deteriorate day by day. He described her actions much like an animal. She required care 24 hours a day. When she needed water, she would find her way to the kitchen and stand before the sink. He would put her hand on the faucet and turn on the water then her eyes would light up, but she never could learn to turn on the water. Her condition became so bad her Dr. insisted that she be committed to a proper institution. She was at Westville then and he would go up each Saturday morning and would be needing a new car. He taught thru the week but would go to see her each week-end. I was sorry I had no car he desired and I let him walk away. About six weeks later he returned. I was curious when I saw him and I asked about his wife. He said she no longer knew him. He cried, said he needed a car, and told me of his past six weeks. Someone in Angola told him of a dealer friend in Warsaw who had an Olds dealership and large inventory of cars on hand and also he had connections at Lansing with a dealer where he could get any car they had, so they went to Warsaw. The dealer made him a price difference on the car of his

choice. Calling Lansing, Michigan, they traded cars. The following Monday, the Warsaw dealer came by at Angola. He and the dealer went up to select the car. He found a green 4 door just what he wanted with minor exceptions. He drive it back to Angola. At Azar's they ate and he gave him the '55 trade-in, signed the title and a check for the difference. The Warsaw dealer agreed to pick up the car on Thursday and change the radio as he desired and return the car the same day. They came for the car early Thursday but didn't get it back that evening, nor the next. Finally, after no satisfaction by telephone, he had a man take him to Warsaw. He confronted the dealer, "Where is my new car?" He was told they did not have enough money to pay the Lansing dealer and they had come and got the car. He couldn't get his money back, \$3,800 or such. Sick and distraught, he asked for the trade-in. They had sold it! Gone. He returned to Angola, no car, no cash. He had secured a lawyer in fact he tried three different times with different attorneys even the F.B.I. took it up because of crossing the state line. He got nothing. Never got him to court. Why, all three lawyers told him that in order to prosecute him successfully first, they must prove he had "intended" to defraud. They couldn't do that because he kept saying he would like to return his money and car but was broke. He did not have the money. He thought he had enough to make the deal. He had to give up. He told me he had no car at all and no money. Because his wife was so incapable, he could not touch their funds. Everything was in both names. I sold him the 6 cylinder Chevy 4 door driver training car, that I just got back at season's end, and financed the entire amount. He was grateful and would come by to see me now and then. Adding insult to injury was the fact that he had taught law all these years and now learned that you can't prosecute for fraud unless you can prove the other INTENDED to defraud. If you could prove that, then OK. He couldn't.

A customer at our dealership, I'll call him Ray Nelson, came one day in 1962 driving the nicest yellow Ford tudor hardtop. It was a 1957 but looked like new. It looked like it had been produced yesterday and kept on display in a museum for five years. He just wanted a new car, in fact, I asked him why. Well, we

just as he could be as long as no one lied to him but if he ever caught someone in a lie, he could dig in his heels and was tough. I thought I'd never forget his name, but right now it's gone. He asked Joe and the Mrs. "to make a list of belongings in the car and take three days to do it carefully and list every item and approximate value and to go over it and over it including the stuff in the trunk and back seat and think about what you loaded before you left Florida and I'll return Monday and settle up." We got together and hated to think they were leaving soon. Monday came and they came to the garage. The insurance man came and they gave him the list of things and estimate of the values of each. The insurance agent looked it all over and asked them how much time they spent on it and prepared to write them a check then and there. "Now is this everything?" "Yes, yes" that is all they said. I can't recall the amount but it seems to me it was near \$400. (This was the Spring of 1952) The agent wrote the check for the car. It had but 2,000 miles, I believe, then wrote the check for the belongings. He doubled the amount of their list. He took their list for his office but made the check for \$800, not \$400 as they had expected. They left to resume their trip to Michigan and we assured them we would run up there during the summer. I asked the agent why he choose to do that twice the amount of the loss as he did. He said, "The kind of people they are, they will get home and remember things that are lost and look at the value of some of these things. They are great people." It was so.

The Hammans asked us to come visit at their house in upper Michigan. We drove up to St. Ignace in August to see them and revisit the Island. After the ferry trip across to Mackinaw Island, we hunted their house. We were in for a great time. Now she was Scottish, very much so, and so warm and happy that we would come. She hugged and squeezed like we were a son and daughter. Quickly drying her hands on her apron like Mom would do, she did a very different thing Mom would not do. She brought us a drink. Now the hugging and kissing were a bit unusual to Millie as her family were less demonstrative, but she adjusted quickly. I was proud of her. This was a quality Millie had displayed often. She could adjust and fit in whatever it required. Now the drinks were

something else. We declined them and it hurt Mrs. Hamman right now. Her beaming face fell quickly. We relented and drank a little glass of something warm. She was happy. Here it is their expression of appreciation and love, I learned later. We did the right thing.

We were to learn that Joe had lived nearly all his life on this island. A full blooded Indian, he became a guide in early years and later, a tour guide for visitors. He was assigned to escort the governors, who maintain a vacation house there and visiting dignitaries. He got out his best rig, the nicest team of horses, and proceeded to drive us all over the island explaining how it came about; how it once was and telling stories of dignitaries' visits. We had visited this island a time or two before but never like this. Millie and I had ridden a tandem bike on the trail completely around the island, a distance of 9 miles, years before, but avoided the carriages because of the cost. Well, we had a deluxe tour at no charge this time!

Another story of interest occurred in the summer of 1958 or '59 when a tall, well dressed man came to see me about a new car. His name was Gus Barkdiell. He was a professor at Tri State College in Angola teaching law. He wanted to trade is 1955 F85 small Olds coupe for a new larger car. The reason was that he expected to do considerably more driving and felt a larger, heavier car would be better. His story captured my attention. Seems his wife was one who had no known relatives. She had been placed on a doorstep as an infant and had been passed here and there growing up. She lacked trust in people and suffered as result. In school she did become close friends with one girl. They became inseperable, always together. When you saw one, you saw both. They were good for each other and kept close ties although seperated. The other girl married a doctor while she married the college professor. They visited back and forth the Barkdiell's in Angola, the Dr. and wife in eastern Ohio.

The past year, they decided to build a new house northwest of Angola out near a wooded area and have their "dream home" at last. The house was framed and enclosed with some walls completed others in the process. They spent their evenings out there enjoying the prospects that all this could be

checks, we put so much in each fund, even our liquor. He puts \$20 a week in the kitty for that and I do too, and we make it last! (These were later days, 1960 and \$160 a month for liquor! -- well, I never forgot that either!)

PERSONAL SCHOOL

My earliest recollections of school life begin with my 1st grade experiences at a little one room school near our house. We had nice cement steps in front of our house out by the road. My dad dug it there from the church sometime before when the church was elevated to accomodate a basement and a higher step. It was smooth and made a nice place to sit and wait for other students to pass.

The kids from the west; Kings, Casselmans and those would leave earlier and walk to the church south of our house. The Forrest kids would see them on Clarence King's hill and they would start north to meet at the church. The school was north of the church, less than a half a mile so as they passed our house, I would tag along.

I was the only one six years old. The only one in the first grade. There were two in the second grade. Wayne Miller and Glenn Forrest. There were no students in the third grade. I believe there was someone in each of the remaining grades up to and including the eighth grade. The school was a small, one room only with some seats larger than others. There was a tank on three legs the teacher kept filled with water and a tin cup hung nearby for the thirsty students. On the side of the room to the east, I remember a restroom.

The teacher that year, 1922, was a man. His name was August Kuckuck. Mr. Kuckuck lived three miles south of our house and drove a car. He had a new model T Ford sedan, side curtains and all. An automobile, at that time, was the center of attention especially for boys. The older boys, Forrest and John Miller and others were out there examining the car much of the time. Don Forrest and John Miller figured out the way to start the car. They did so on at least two seperate occasions and entertained the girls and myself. One time, they got the engine

going and stuck corn cobs in the little tail pipe. It would build up pressure and blow them out a great distance. Wayne got down on his knees to catch one. He did--in the face! A black eye and skinned nose was his souvenir before Mr. Kuckuck got out there to stop it. One time Don and John got the thing going and drove it around the school house. August came running out. He chose to chase his car much to the delight of the boys. I tried to run after the whole gang but couldn't keep up so I stopped when I heard them coming and hid along the side of the building in a little corner area before the whole group came by. August was running behind with his hand on the rear of the car; kids of all ages trailing behind. The boys knew how to rev up the engine with the hand throttle then raise the spark control lever to retard spark and make the engine backfire. This aided in shooting the corn cobs from the exhaust. These were carried from home in pockets of the overalls.

There was a rather large window on the west side of the school room. In front of this was a heavy wooden table where the boys made airplanes. I wasn't permitted to touch them but they were something to see. They were the latest thing; the two wing, the only thing we knew of the biplane, with wire rigging, little wheels and all painted. Of course they didn't or couldn't fly but one could look and imagine. I don't know if it was a class or just a spare time endeavor. Mr. Kuckuck was a good teacher but could impose almost no discipline. The older girls, Ruth Ester Benjamin, Viola Forrest, the King girls, Roy King all gave August little concern but the older boys took great advantage of his weakness. At times when August rang the school bell to call us in from recess or at noon, the bell would turn upside down and stay that way so we had no bell sound. When this happened, there was delay in the school coming to order. In nice decent winter weather, the kids would all be out north of the school sliding and skating on a big pond on Herman Meloy's place. In those days before extensive ditching, ponds were everywhere all winter long. August would ring and ring the bell with slow uncertain response. Kids would gradually return unless the bell turned over then he had to dress and come out to get us all. He did that at times. There was no

traded cars and he brought me paint for touch-ups that he had, the service records, original floor mats (unused) everything like that. I enjoyed the family; a lovely wife a little shorter than he. She often came along and brought two little boys with her. We became good friends. As he was the superintendent of a church not far from Ashley, we had talk always of programs and services. We were the same age. They kept their cars so well and we traded now and then. We visited them at their house on occasion, an afternoon or evening. You can imagine the shock when someone told me they had left the church. The next thing I heard was that they were getting a divorce! I just didn't believe it all. Then enough was said. I told Millie, "I've got to hunt him up and see what happened. (being from Missouri shows up now and then) I can't come up with imagination like some and be satisfied. I must go see it for myself. Well, I found him one day. He was living in a little dirty one room motel near Angola. I tell you, I couldn't believe what I saw from the clean white shirt pressed pants and ready smile I knew, I found, well, I hardly recognized the man; dirty, room all cluttered up, not shaved. He had been so particular and now was alone except with a bottle. He was drunk but he knew me. We cried. It was a time and I'll recall forever, I guess. He smelled bad. I didn't even want to sit down. "Why?", I said finally. He made some excuses; no job, didn't feel good etc. but when I pressed him, "Hardship for others, OK, but I want to know why all this?" He told me he and his wife had a little quarrel. It got bigger. They each contributed to it until it grew to name calling, then she dropped a bomb on him. She informed him of the boys. They now had a smaller one; three boys. He should not discipline them. They were not his, she told him. Who the fathers were; a neighbor was the father of the two older and a man at the factory where she worked was the father of the younger one. He just walked out, thought of it day and nite. Those boys had his name; he was proud of them, used them in programs, went on fishing trips, supported them. "Not his" meant to him that he had nothing, absolutely nothing; no pride, no car (a junker), no nothing. He didn't want to live. His life was over and he had nothing to show

for it. I couldn't talk. I felt like this was a dream. I went back to the garage and tried to work but I just went home and mowed lawn and worked in the garden. I could not do garage work or make contracts for people. Well, he came to see me one nite. I was working on a Tuesday evening. I think he knew I took Monday off in the later years, but worked every Tuesday evening. I was cleaning up my desk as I had expected two older ladies from Auburn. They were friends of Mike. They expected to come up to see me and talk new car. Mike told me how particular they were so I was going to tidy up a bit. I just got the desk cleaned and in came two drunks. One was Ray. He weighed about 110 lbs. The other one larger but look alikes. In his arm he had six big sandwiches from the tavern next door! The other man had bottles of beer and two pops for me. They dumped six sandwiches, beer and pop on my clean desk. He was going to be "good" to me, he said. Before I could get on top of this, a beer got upset, sticky stuff too. The women came in and didn't stay long. They left and never came back. I ate a bite or two, got a phone call and told them it was Millie. I had to go home and did so. He died soon after. The two older boys came to the garage now and then. I sold the oldest one a car or station wagon. We never talked of his father. They spoke of him but little. Their mother had remarried and lived in Michigan. Neither of the two boys were doing well. The last I ever heard, it was a strange story that I saw but could hardly believe. I don't think the neighbors or church folks ever knew why, as now and then a member would tell of it and couldn't figure what happened.

A hard working couple came in one time to trade cars. I didn't know them. They knew Guy real well. He was retired now so they were forced to talk to me. I learned both worked at a factory and wanted to trade cars. I made a price they accepted it all. She asked the monthly payment. I figured it up with insurance and all. The payment exceeded \$100 per month. Well, I was afraid of that whatever it was, I can't recall. I do recall saying, "Can you handle that? Now one month or three months is easy but by say two years, it's a lot." "No problem", she said. "We budget all our money. We stick to our budget and stay right on it. When we cash our

ladder at the schoolhouse so the teacher would send John and Don down to Miller's to get a ladder and set it up to the roof. They would climb up and then push the bell over center but I recall they would be sitting up there reading the funnies and ignore orders. It took repeated invitations sometimes to get them down then they had to return the ladder, of course. They did, on occasion when August was busy or at the outroom, pull on the rope very, very carefully and get the bell upside down. Then it was unknown until time to ring for a return to class. The school was a very informal place and one year of this lead to a great shock the next year. The second year of school was greatly different. To begin with, a school bus came right to your door and picked up all elementary students only. Grades 1 thru 8 could ride the bus to school each day and the bus would return students after school. The one room school nearby was closed and we all went to Ashley.

The bus was very small with a long seat running lengthwise on either side. It was driven by Marion Clark and was a thrill to ride the route and see where others lived and were ready waiting to board as we came along.

Another surprise awaited some of us when we arrived at school, the BIG school. You could get lost. It even had an upstairs with rooms for high school kids up there. The three of us stayed together for a time as we didn't know most of the kids, and there were lots of them, as grades were combined then in one room. Mrs. Mildred Mintzer was the teacher and set forth rules of conduct. We took them lightly, I guess. Glenn and Wayne had two years of running wild. I had one, that was enough. We talked and got up and down as we wished. The result--we stood in the corner for all to see several times before we got the true message. One time we all three were standing in separate corners at the same time. This did not go on long. We learned the hard way.

The boys restroom was directly below our classroom and was an interesting place. There were a number of new inventions for us. There were separate stalls with flush toilets--unbelievable. They worked with a slight push of the side lever. There was more; manufactured soft, cut and sized paper on a convenient roller for ready use. There

was a row of urinals to accomodate one so quickly. No wait! You could run out the door quickly, hardly missing a pitch! There was another invention that caught my interest; the lavatories with two faucet controlls. I could run any amount of warm water or cold water I wanted. It was great! I became curious as to where the water came from and how those controls worked. In looking down underneath, I traced the two pipes and there was a hand control valve on each incoming line. Well, I thought I might make the lavatory fill more quickly and add zest to handwashing by turning the valves. I did and I liked the fast flow that resulted so I opened them still more. It seemed I could do the school a good turn with my invention so I went down the line and opened them all. I showed the boys what a great idea it was. The next day I came to school and when I went to wash my hands the water ran so slowly. Right then and there I set up to reopen them all again. I did so with no problem. The following day when I came to school, I went first to the restroom and sure enough, they were so restricted. I set down my dinner bucket and went to work. I was interrupted by a loud knocking on the back door that had a loose glass in it and opened into the furnace room. I will never forget that sight. Dud Bowers was standing by the big glass pane with the meanest look he had available. He stepped into the room and gave me a bit of information. He told me that was his job. He didn't like the water gushing out on the floor and tracking up the stairs and if I did that again, he would take me down to see "FRED". Now to be taken to see Fred was the worst thing that could happen. We were told of a big wheel in the furnace room with straps on it. It was a spanking machine where he took the worst ones and it was terrible. Well, I was satisfied with the convenience of even the slow water flow from that minute on. I can still see his big red eyes glaring at me through the window. I always tried to be nice to Mr. Bowers after that. A few years ago, I asked him if he had some good clean boxes we could use at church. He did. When I asked, "How much?" he said, "I'll charge you the same as you charged me for that book of "A" coupons to buy gas so Ora and I could go and see Carl before he was shipped overseas. I had

forgotten but during the war, the bus drivers would come to the furnace room to visit and warm up before school was out. I heard him say his family would sure like to see Carl at camp but had no gas tickets left. He said the next morning I brought him a book of them and he used enough to take them there and back and never forgot it. He was old now and retiring, but he taught me a lesson. George "Dud" Bowers.

The model T carried the little bus back and forth to Ashley quite faithfully but was a victim of wet weather and deep snow. The wet weather required that the timer be removed and the points dried out and kept dry. The deep snow kept the bus in the garage and Mr. Marion Clark then used a team of horses, and he always kept a good, young spirited team, pulling a bobsled. Now the bobsled had a wagon box with top boy sides, I suppose the sides were 36 to 40 inches. In there he put horse blankets, bed blankets, gloves, scarves and plenty of cover items. He would go house to house and haul a load of kids to school in the wagon box on the bobsled. It was fun. There were new experiences for me as this was the greatest learning period of life. I think that recalling my early experiences often and realizing their importance has helped me to be more considerate to first, second and third grade children who rode my bus years later.

The bus drivers were selected men that took on the responsibility as now one Pierce Ayers drove a bus to school and brought a load in each morning his senior year.

For a short time, the Smithfield township area voted to transport all students; high school as well as elementary. This required a larger bus and so we rode a 24 passenger bus for a time. Mr. Clark was no longer the driver but the bus did always pass his house. At that time, Dorothy and her brother, Robert, rode the bus. There was a problem near their house. It was where the road was low just east of their house and water would close that road often. The driver could tell if he might cross by observing the fence on either side of the narrow road. He would always come to a stop and drive thru slowly if he decided to cross. Well, one time we stalled out there in the deepest part. Water came in the door. There we sat! The wind was splashing little waves against the right

side of the bus. I don't need to tell you we were quiet. We just sat there. The first thing I saw was Mr. Clark in his yard waving to the driver. Then he walked out to the barn and a short time later he emerged riding a horse. He had harnessed a horse and had a chain and single tree under his arm and rode the horse down to the water and slowly the horse came right up along side of our shipwrecked bus. After talking thru the window to the driver, he rode up front of our bus. I don't know how he hooked up to the bumper but he did. He was astride the big horse and as he tightened the chain, we began to move. That horse pulled us across the "pond" perhaps 3 feet deep. After we got across it took a while to get the engine going. The driver took no more chances above a 2 foot depth after that.

It was about this time when a campaign was started to get rid of sparrows and mice and rodents of all kinds. Contests were set up and the boys took it seriously. A sparrow head was worth 25 points, a mouse tail was worth 10 points, a rat tail was worth 50 points etc. Well, nite after nite we were out catching birds. The strawstacks were the best places. In cooler weather, the sparrows would burrow back in little holes and stay there over nite. With the aid of a flashlight, you could just reach in and pick them like apples. The chicken coops were a favorite also. There we would hang up a lantern and use shingles to play badminton. When it got quiet we would pick up and count our game. Boys would come to school with paper sacks full of heads kept over a weekend. They were a smelly bunch with tails mixed in. All of it had to be separated and counted. How did we get away with that in the bus and school?

One day, I received a letter from San Antonio, Texas, wherever that was, addressed to "Miss Jean Reinoehl". It ran thru the school and made a lot of fun for the kids and I began signing my name "Gene", a fact I would regret many times later. I wanted to fly and had written to several schools from newspaper ads asking for information and costs which resulted in one of the letters coming to "Miss Jean" and made all the fun at school.

The Ashley school was under direction of Mr. Fred Fredrick, a firm but fair disciplinarian indeed. There were many who

out there in the shed that I hated, but Dad did something about that. We went to Ft. Wayne and spent most all day going here and there. Earl Forrest knew the city real well and Dad just let him go from place to place looking at pick-up trucks. I wanted each one but Earl knew what we should get. They wanted \$110 for a 1929 Model A pick-up. It was a good one but Dad wouldn't budge from an offer of \$100. I was afraid the deal was falling thru but as we left, the man took the \$100 cash and I drove it home. What a truck it was. It was also my car most of the time. We hauled all our tomatoes to Ashley on that little truck, three acres worth each year. Dad made a clever rack to carry the load and accomodate hampers and I had to quit picking sometimes to take a load in. It was a tough job, but----

Claude Carpenter came in with his model T but we had a faster more up to date 1929 with a gear shift. Earl Forrest had a 1929 Ford ton and a half flat bed truck and also a model A Ford convertible. It was that car, the convertible, that Clark ran into a tree with one nite after a storm. He was returning from seeing Willa Parsel. He came over a hill, the wind had tipped a tree across the road and he couldn't get stopped in time. He got the car repaired but a short time later it suffered a very serious accident and was never restored.

The little truck did everything at home. It made a million trips to the other place for wood; in the field with seed and fertilizer. It took Roger Thompson and I to Indianapolis to the State Fair for a week end. We slept in the box and had a great trip. It would run well on the Farm Bureau tractor fuel, which was called tractorline. It would start on that fuel and after a short warm up, you couldn't tell it from gasoline. It would haul wood on kerosene if we kept the radiator covered and the engine hot, but if it stopped, we had to drain it out and refill with gas again, but we did use kerosene at times. Gasoline cost a dollar for seven or eight gallons. Tractorline was 8¢ per gallon and kerosene was 5¢ anywhere. We used that truck to go to the movies when we could all get in. If not, we took the car and loaded in everyone we could find along the way. Free movies in Waterloo was a popular place in the theatre mid-week. There someone played music up front while

the cowboy chased the villian and set the scene while you read the dialogue taking place. Hudson had free movies on Saturday evening and the folks would go to Ashley to hear the free band concert while we kids would run over to Hudson to watch movies. How we would chase back afterward and hope the folks were still there. If not, well, it was 3 1/2 miles back to home.

Glenn Forrest was an exceptional basketball player and for a time, Ashley enjoyed one of the best ball handlers in the area, bar none. We didn't go to many games. We did some, but not often. The Forrest family never missed a ball game and took great delight in watching Glenn play. Glenn was no sooner out of school than Bob came along and the Forrest family enjoyed another star. While Bob was small for his age in comparison to other team players, his speed and nimbleness made him perhaps the most valuable player Ashley had and to see him outwit and out manuver his taller and more formidable opponents was a real joy. It provided an era of basketball our community would long remember.

The last day of school came on April 23, 1934. For graduation, the Junior class had given us a banquet in the Town Hall and then we all went to a movie at Angola. The last day we came to school, then the kids went to Hamilton to the skating rink and had a good time. When I came home, it was about 4 p.m. and Mom, as always it seemed, was working at the stove. I was telling her what a great day we had. She enjoyed my telling her the things of school and listened intently but kept on with the cooking too. While I was talking to Mom, telling her of all the things I had done that day; how we met at school and Fred talked to us, got our grade cards and ended school, then we went to Hamilton to the skating rink and skated for what seemed like hours, then rode around in cars. While I was telling her all these things, Dad came in the back door. He just closed the door and stood there listening and so I continued. When I finished Dad said, "What'cha gonna do now?" "I don't know, Pop", I answered. He said, "What 'ya gonna do?" "Well", I said, "Nothing. Are the cows out or is it time to do chores?" "No", he replied, "Everything's all right. It ain't time to do chores yet. You're out of school now and I want to know what

could testify to that but none could say that he was unfair. I was called before him on two or three occasions and fear reigned in one's heart. But everyone liked Fred for his fairness. Millie and I attended his retirement by invitation and I felt honored to do so. He retired twice after returning to work again, we attended both times and exchanged stories. I recall him telling us of all the paddlings, of all the "down to the office" and such. With kids for a lifetime, he never felt the first retaliation of revenge. When others would find their car scratched by a nail mark or a pocket knife scratch by a door, hood, or trunk. He never received the first one. He felt he had tried to always be fair.

Mr. Fredrick had the respect of parents as well as the students. There was a period of time when the monthly P.T.A. meetings were the "goingest" thing ever. When the parents put on a play in the Ashley Town Hall, the hall had people on the gym floor and bleacher seats that many thought were 1,000. One time I played the part of a woman all the way to be married finally to Dutch Allen of Ashley. I was taught to kick up my one foot when he lifted the veil and kiss me. When the teachers put on their play, Fred was the villain. There was little standing room left that night. It was real good for school-parent relations and students did have good teachers trying to do their job.

I remember walking to Ashley to practice things now and then it would take about 45 to 50 minutes. I'd often get a ride home from things. I wanted to play basketball. I asked Dad and he said, "No. If you need more to do, I'll have some for you right here" - end of discussion.

One day in 1933, Ralph Kanaga came to school driving a brand new 1933 Chevy tudor. It had all the new, latest things. It was the first year for these innovations. It had an all steel "turret top", a strange look to get used to. It had Fisher "no draft" ventilation. Where front windows were divided up and down with a wing vent to open for individual ventilation. A real worthwhile thing. The all steel top has been used since that day and the no-draft ventilation was used until recently when air conditioning became the normal. Another new innovation on the 1933 model was "free wheeling". There was a lever under the dash that when

pushed in put the drive wheels in free running and the engine then did not slow the car down as we were used to. It was on but the one year and not as popular as thought. The car was quiet but hard on brakes and some felt it unsafe. The same principle however is in many cars now to save gas but is built into the automatic transmission when you permit it to operate in an "overdrive" position. Ralph was busy for a time giving up "free" rides in that car so we could see how things worked.

In 1934, Chevrolet master sedans were equipped with an individual front wheel suspension. It was a departure from the standard front axle used in cars up to that time. Walter Shuller drove one of those to school each day. There were maybe four kids who drove to school at that time. Bob Swank had a car his father, Carl, had purchased from the Charley Thompson estate after the funeral. It led to a terrible fight between Bob and Gerald Montgomery over the attentions of Alice Kirchner. They fought with bricks and stones until Fred got to them. They were all skinned up and bloody, too.

I entered all class plays, cantatas, or programs that came along at school. At that time, Helen Ellert was S & E (social and education) leader for the township Farm Bureau. She gave me a part in a play each year as the Smithfield time came to entertain the county. It was fun and you met a lot of folks at that time. There were crowds of farm folks and we had good times.

There was a government program earlier of free activity at various schools. Irene King would go each week and she would pick me up each Thursday night. Little did we know Franklin Van Scoiete, who was the instructor, was a Communist and teaching Communism. He ran a restaurant in Auburn and was later picked for this effort. I went to everything that was free, I think.

The morning of my sixteenth birthday, I came downstairs to find the table all set for breakfast and Mom ready to go to the barn, but one thing was different. My plate was upside down. I picked it up and there was to be my most prized possession. My very own drivers license! It cost 50¢ in those days. That was a great day! I was never so happy with a gift. A boy at 16 with a drivers license was a KING! The old Overland Whippet

thought 'I got one of those again'. The folks all kept one hand on the rope support and with the other held the morning paper. I could not stand still, no way. When it started up, I'd get into the guy behind and when it stopped, I'd mess up the paper for the guy in front. I would have rather walked, but the distance was far too great. However, I made it and arrived on time. I soon learned the get off and on areas, the transfer and where I wanted to go. Chicago is laid out mostly square and with the idea of North and South simple East and West I would keep my directions OK. Alva had told me it is 8 blocks to the mile, so I could get around pretty well, but I never did learn to stand still and after two weeks, I still was falling front and back almost like the first day.

At school, they put us in groups of six and we had to take an engine apart down to little bits and pieces before noon then put it all back together and get it to run before we went home toward evening. We had a different engine each day for two weeks. there was only one we never got started. I don't know why we gave up. These engines were bolted to the cement floor. I thought that was nice. We kept them swept and if you dropped a piece, it was clean and easy to find, but let me tell you, I wasn't used to cement and before I knew it, my legs hurt so bad at nite. Alva would tease me about that and they would laugh because after supper I wanted to go to bed, and did too. I closed my door, turned on the radio and fell asleep. Alva told me he followed me in sometimes and turned off the radio. He had more fun teasing me because I came from the farm, a "young shaver and couldn't take it here", was a topic of supper conversation. He told me the kids got such a kick out of my dialect, as it was so different.

Alva was a hard worker. His only recreation I could see was teasing. He was able to look so serious and talk so earnestly, "For heaven's sake, Marge," he'd begin, "George dropped his fork. Hazel, take that one to the doctor, he's got epilepsy or something." I mean it, how he would run on George and Bill too. Hazel wasn't even immune. It was fun when it was someone else, but Alva was sharp and witty and won most of the exchanges.

On Saturday, Alva took me along down to their shop. He gave me a lathe to run and showed me how to cut spools of a certain size. I did that one Saturday. One Saturday I rode with a guy by the name of "Red" who delivered products all over the city. That was an education! Alva would not let me walk around the shop sidewalks by myself. I learned why when he invited me to go with him to place bets on some horse races. Alva collected 25¢ and 50¢ from each man working and the name of the horse and race then we went out the back door and down the alley. I never saw such people sitting on steps, laying along the alley, arguing, men and women too. He just kept walking, not saying a word. I stuck right with him. We came to a little restaurant. He told me to stay with him not to talk to anyone in there. Fine with me! We walked past the little counter, went to the restroom-like place. We stood in front of a door for a time saying nothing. All at once the door opened. We walked down an old stairway that circled around to a basement of trash and junk, walked to another door. This door had a glass about 2" by 4" and a man had his face up close to it. I could see his eyes and that was all. I guess he was looking us over, me especially, because Alva came each week, but I was a stranger. He must have decided I was a "doo doo" and opened the door. We went in the darndest place I ever saw. A rather large room, smoke filled, crowded with tough cookies if I ever saw any. I couldn't help but stare. They stared at me. On one wall was a huge chart of information for racing horses; names, owners, times, etc. A long bar in front with perhaps 20 men accepting bets. We stepped up and Alva made his bets. I wondered if they would let us out. I figured something would happen, a fight, shooting, stabbing or something. It was a boiling place. I think Alva took me to the worst one so I'd know what went on. Well, the crowd down there, smoke and noise resulted in what we call "atmosphere" that will last a lifetime. We had no trouble getting out and back upstairs through the restroom and outdoors. It was sure good to get out of there. I knew then I was from the country and had to be careful.

Around fifth or 6th grade I had a teacher from Auburn. Her name was Pearle Riggs.

you're going to do?" Well, that was a shock and he posed a question I had not considered. Seems all I had thought about was school, girls and fun. He continued, "A young buck like you, and not afraid to work, (and that was a compliment, I knew) I guess you ain't. You might get a job at Auburn, I don't know. If you did, you oughta pay Mom some board and room, hadn't ya', or if you want to work for me, I guess I can use ya'. I'll give you \$2.50 per week and I'll pay you once a week and give you board and room and use of the car once a week, but I want to know now what you're gonna do." I was on the spot and seemed I wasn't ready but said, "I guess I'll work for you, Pop." He said, "Then ya' better change your clothes hadn't 'ya?" I did. That was the third week of April and we got so busy that I gave little thought to life and career. I just was busy each day and only looked to that day, I guess.

In September, I was counting my money and learned I was accumulating some. I had \$32 saved up for a correspondence course on diesel engines. I decided that a future would be good on the railroad as firemen became copilots and they were beginning to use more and more diesels on the passenger than freight lines. The lessons came every two weeks from the Hemphill Diesel School in Chicago. One had to study the material, then answer in detail a set of questions covering the lesson. I tried faithfully to work on them. I had paid \$30 down and \$8 per month thru the winter and then finished late in the summer. When completed, I went to Chicago to spend two weeks in the classroom to complete. Dad and Mom arranged for me to stay with Alva Buss, a good friend of Dad. Seems when Alva was young and at home, he spent much time with Dad who lived nearby and when his dad would deny him a need or a problem, Dad gave him money. Alva was going to school in Angola. Dad was a bachelor then and could spare some money now and then. It helped "Ikey", as Dad called him, get an education to teach school. The largest sum was enough to buy a car one time when "Ikey's" father rebelled.

Alva came to visit us and was glad for the opportunity to something for Dad and invited me to spend the time I would spend in Chicago with him. Now that was a great experience for me. Alva was a school teacher earlier

but also married a school teacher, Hazel, his wife was a daughter of a Chicago family who operated the Chicago Pulley and Shaftline Co. This company was either fully or largely owned by the family and they encouraged Alva and Hazel to retire from teaching and move back to Chicago and Alva became Superintendent. It was a machine shop that made all kinds of things to set up and maintain the many machine shops around the bustling city. They gave me one of the kid's room and combined George and Bill to one room. It was wonderful. There was a bathroom nearby that would have amazed a king a few years ago. It had all the conveniences you could imagine; hair conditioner, mirrors, brushes to clean your teeth, a big long bath tub you could swim in, even sit down, and all the hot water you could use at finger tip and on and on and it was all nearby, too! Over my bed was a radio. I tried to listen to it all nite, but they had to come in and turn it off time after time.

Alva walked with me to the corner on Keeler and got on a streetcar with me and rode to the point of departure and got a transfer and caught the right car, rode downtown to the get-off point and took me to the school. This was on Sunday as a rehearsal and the next morning I would be on my own. The next morning tempered me to be a considerate school bus driver for first time riders at age six. I learned how traumatic it can be.

I waited for the streetcar. Today, however, there was no seat, in fact I had to stand about half way back in the midst of the darndest crowd I ever saw. There were men and women standing. Seemed the ones in the seats were reading papers and couldn't get out of their seat if they tried, and couldn't care less. The aisle was standing solid full more than half way from the back. In two stops, I was buried in the midway between front door and back, couldn't see a street sign, cigar smoke you could cut with a knife, windows so darn dirty you thought it was going to storm, and noisy. Those iron wheels and rough track were shaking and pounding. Stop and go; stop and go. I just knew I'd miss the street. It made some folks mad but I pushed my way to the front and told the operator I wanted of at such and such a street. He nodded his head and probably

and started her own home. Celia married Gene Schroppel and started a family. Pearle and her mother lived in East St. Louis on Russell Street. When she learned she would have a baby, she made arrangements to go to the hospital not far away.

I was born September 11, 1916 and it was learned I had tuberculosis with evidence on the left lung. With all involved, the meager income scarcely enough for mother and daughter, the likelihood of doctoring a baby and the care requirements, the decision was made to leave the baby for adoption.

She told of short time recovery and burden of the responsibility and decided to go back and get the child only to be told the baby had died with T.B. and that was that. I can't recall if they said the baby had been put in a home and later died or what happened. I can't remember.

Later in life and when more mature, she married and had two more children; a boy named William and a girl named Marian. Her husband worked earlier in the marriage but was fascinated with gambling and betting. As time went along, he became addicted to gambling and alcohol. It was a struggle with kids in school now and working full-time. Her pay check was running the house. She made the decision to divorce. She then continued to raise the children and never married again. William (Bill) went to the service and did well.

Both Bill and Marian married and lived nearby her place in Kansas City where Celia lived so all were near one another.

She carried pictures of the children. Both of them have children of their own and as I remember now, each of them were operating stores. I think Bill had his own furniture store and Marian and her husband had a store also. By the pictures, we learned Marian was a pretty and attractively nice young lady and Bill, while younger than I, looked very much like me.

She became relaxed and visited with us warmly and declared she would get the two kids together and tell them the whole story and let us know.

In as much as she went to New York City the first ten days of each month, we had opportunity to see her at our house or at the

airport in Chicago. Midway airport was at Cicero and 63rd street.

We would call her at times and she would call us. I was watching for a clue as to the result of her kids feelings for us out here in the woods. She could never get to that job. As I noticed that she had not yet done so, and as time went by, I began to realize the cost and danger of that disclosure. I remember learning of her determination to keep the kids dressed and in Sunday School. I could not recall indication of love and dedication for their welfare without benefit of a father in their house, but I have reasons to believe she tried her best to set a good example and enjoyed great respect from them thru their entire home life. With the ideals she set forth, the disclosure of my existence would cloud and dilute that with untold results.

We went to Kansas City a couple times to visit. It was nice. We went to her sister's house. Pearle would come there. She toured us around town and showed us her kid's homes, big beautiful houses. We saw their stores. I only remember Billy's but I think we saw both. We never encountered either one of the kids, however.

I recall a nice visit once when we stopped west bound with the Winnebago and had a nice time then went on west to complete a vacation trip.

One time I flew out to Kansas City to pick up a truck that I had sold to Ashley Vault Co. I directed it to go there from Detroit for installation of a special bed and hoist. When completed, I flew out, rented a car and drove out to see Celia. She called Pearle and we had a nice evening there. I returned to the hotel and picked up the truck the next day. The body was not quite ready and I had to wait until 4 p.m. There is more than 100 acres of a huge cave under the city's west side and there is where Halmark stores greeting cards for distribution. They come in there by the semi loads; 25 ton at a time, as the factory is not far, right there in Kansas City. The truck welding shop was nearby as well as all kinds of shops. I got the truck at 4 p.m. and drove about 5 blocks right into downtown when the gear shift lever came apart at an intersection in the downtown traffic lane. It would not go at stop lite. I got underneath and discovered a pin was left out. I got it in by sticking a wire thru to hold it in place and

She was short, very short, witty and full of fun. She enjoyed teaching school and told us we were the best class she ever had. She drove a big Studebaker convertible. It must have cost a million dollars! She would go up that gravel road and make more dust than six Model T's. She would wave at us when she passed. I would be waiting for the bus and she was on her way to Ashley, too.

One day she stopped and I got to ride along in the big high wheeled long hooded car. It was really something to ride in--the latest thing. She would have to slide up and down to push in the clutch and shift the gears, but when she got going, she could go. She was so small that only her toe touched the foot feed but that was enough. She took me along often and how I liked to see that speedometer climb up to 55 and 60 mph. I suppose I added another 5 or 10 when I told the other boys!

Whenever she got thru classes a bit early and we had our desks clean and in order and if we were good and a whole list of other things and all of 'em had to be, too, then she would read to us. She would ask what we wanted and we would call out the same one over and over, "James Whitcomb Riley's 'The Raggedy, Raggedy Man' ". Now we got so we knew the words but she read it each time with such expression we could hardly wait.

The last day before the Christmas vacation she told us some terrible news. She said that while she enjoyed our class, she had to tell us we would no longer have Miss Riggs for our teacher after Christmas and for the remainder of the year. Our teacher would be a Mrs. Keesler. Did you ever pour boiling over a handful of dandelions? Well, we wilted--it was the end of the world--we couldn't go on. Another class we knew all had older ladies for teachers but we had the best teacher and now she was leaving. We were sick. She consoled us for a brief time then she told us she was marrying a Mr. Kessler on Christmas and would be back after vacation to teach us. It was a time for celebration. We did shout, laugh, hug and it was a great day. I think it was Mr. Keesler's big Studebaker she drove to school at times because that's the car she had all the time after the marriage.

Linda Phillips and I went to see Pearle when we did a "This Is Your Life" for Dorothy at church. As they had her come to my

retirement and I enjoyed her so much, I thought we might prevail upon her to take a part in the program for Dorothy. She had cancer and said she could not do those things anymore yet she reconsidered and said she would just one more time. She did. She came to Cedar Lake frail and tired but with great enthusiasm she recalled early days. She lived but a few weeks after. The Auburn Chief of Police, Buck Keesler, is her son as a result of that marriage. She was a great lady.

PEOPLE OF INFLUENCE

The strange "first" meeting was only the beginning of a chapter in my life which would yield both benefits and injury as it unfolded.

"Aunt" Pearle, as she suggested we call her, had great poise and control but this was one situation she had no experience for and would play out as it might lead her. She liked Millie right from the start and adored Barbara. At that time, Barbara was five years old. After greetings, we went to the car and made the trip home.

It must have seemed to her we were going into "darkest Africa" as we left Ft. Wayne. For about an hour we followed the old road to Auburn and then turned on the gravel road to our house. The house was the old tenant house and shop from my childhood and we were working it over for living purposes. It was way out in the country. The woods and dust, animals and flies all seemed quite natural to us but when we were to visit her, I was not a little surprised and wondered how scared she must have been leaving her way of life. At night, total strangers not knowing the kind of folks we were or what we would do or felt and yet she felt some obligation. We talked that evening way into the night and exchanged experiences of the past 29 years. She told us of the early life when she and her sister, Celia, lived together with their mother. The mother couldn't work so both girls worked and went to a nearby school. Pearle had a job working for a newspaper publisher after school and later did modeling of clothes for a large department store. It seems to me she was forced to drop out of school and work full time as Celia got married

folks knew it. There are few ministers indeed that attended more meetings, regardless of salary or obligation.

She refused to say an ill word of another, asking little of life so as to not be disappointed. "Do unto others as you would have done unto you," was a motto to live by. She set an example for her family and friends. Examples of humbleness, sincere care for all people would make midgets of many missionaries and ministers.

A woman who never said a word to me as I went out nites. Not the words as do some, "Now, don't drink. Now don't smoke. Now, don't steal. " She used not words but tender looks of hope and pride of what she hoped I'd learned from what she had taught. I just knew what she would and would not have me doing. She never questioned me, but always enjoyed my telling her of my experiences.

This woman paid a great price for me. The finished product left much to be desired but she did her best. She did that. My mom.

My dad comes second. He married my mother who had a little 2 year old son and he took me to be as his own son. I never knew any difference. We worked together so many years in field and woods, barn and shop. He was so able to do anything, was so strong and such a hard worker. He trusted me. On occasions he would tease me or play tricks on me and I was proud of him. He was honest. He got along good with the merchants. His word was good and they knew that. He took great pride in a particular degree of honesty. He built a reputation on his word, keeping his word, making his word good, he called it. He took pride, and well he should, that he could borrow money at a bank quickly, if needed. He often purchased items and horses, machinery, anything, without cash of any part and it was paid when he said it would be. Whether he was ditching or cutting wood for someone, the same for himself. He gave a full and honest day's work. He was known for these two characteristics and it was a disturbing fact of life to see the decline in later life when a strong man became so dependent. I absorbed those qualities from him. I learned to admire him, rough and tough though he was.

He also gave me a glimpse of the cost of alcohol and what the result can be when out of control. The cost can be great. I became observant on this and this too, had given me lessons I learned early.

I also resolved to develop greater respect for womanhood. I, yet to this day, am unable to understand man's disrespect for womanhood and yet know his great dependency for life is all right there.

Pop had some faults, yes, but his worst was the inconsideration of my mom and this was a source of great pain to me.

.....

Glenn Forrest, truly a best friend, who lived more in each year than most folks do in six and that is an understatement because many days of 24 hours had more life than some would know in six years. At an early age he lived a long life. Our community would never be the same after his passing. He touched so many people with a quality of humor unmatched.

Harold Smith, who married Neva Vian, with his overalls or shambra shirt may not catch your attention, but his genuine smile would serve to refresh many, many folks. I never cease to enjoy Harold. He was a great man, I think.

Jack Simmons was a young man one grade behind me at the Ashley school. He married Betty Coggshele and eventually had to leave his wife and small boys to go to war. On the beach of Normandy, one of the seven men together stepped on a land mine. He was the only survivor but suffered great facial disfigurement and was now unable to get a job. He went on to school and returned distinguishing himself as a dedicated worker. He was chief inspector for the federal government. He supervised the building of the bridge over I-69 east of Ashley. Through all his rejections of employers refusing to hire him, I never heard him complain through the hard times they had for years.

Uncle Arley would come to visit and tell stories of railroading on the Northern Pacific.

drove to St. Louis by 10:30 p.m. and got home before 6 a.m., picked up my bus at Dean Smith's where I left it. Dean was a sub driver for me. I got home for breakfast and back on the bus route at 7 a.m.

Pearle's sister, Celia, encouraged her to go to the kids and tell them of me and she said she would but as time went by and she didn't, I realized how hard it must have been so I chose to write less often and call less and less backing away while I could.

Someone reading this years from now will no doubt wonder why I did not keep contact with "Aunt" Pearle. Well, I realized the great burden it would be for her to reveal to her son and daughter, both married with children of their own, of the child she had given birth to before she was married. I felt I couldn't diminish the esteem of her family and children perhaps resulting in the possibility of shortening her life. I decided I should not be so greedy. It was not easy to back off, but I feared for her welfare at a time in her life when she should relax and enjoy rest and not live with fear and anxiety. Also, while I would like to see Billy and Marion, I feared the cost to be greater than the benefits. I feared they might think I came by now for an inheritance or whatever I could claim from her estate, as I saw evidence of some wealth.

I quit writing to her and little by little we didn't call. She did less and less 'til we became estranged.

I've watched for her name in the telephone book in Kansas City. It was there when we passed by on a trip a couple of times, but I looked I think it was in 1987 and her name was no longer listed.

ΩΩΩΩΩ

I would be remiss if I didn't set aside a few lines to recognize other people who had great influence in molding and shaping my life. One's environment, the care, love, teaching, training, examples and experiences have far more effect upon one's life than birth inheritances. We come into this world helpless and without knowledge, and like a sponge, begin to absorb from our surroundings of people and experiences.

Mark 12:43

This poor widow gave all that she had.
She gavethe most of any.

There can only be one person who is and was the single most influence on me -- my mother, Mary Benjamin Stomm Reinoehl.

Mom paid a great price for me. An early life of disappointments; death of the first born child and then to learn her young husband would soon die of a brain tumor. While this information would fill but two or three lines, it existed for many, many years. I was to be the antidote to all this in helping her develop a desire to live. I wonder about that often; did I?

The mountains of work in the house and the barn, children to care for, often pregnant and working up to the very day of delivery and more than I can tell of church and benevolent work. Above all this, she found time to come give aid be it physical, emotional, or most of all just giving the time to listen. She would always do that. I should have been a good listener as much as she accomodated me, but no, I always wanted to talk when what people need, what they want, is so simple; just someone who will stop and listen.

As individuals, we are influenced so much more from what we see than what we hear. Perhaps we participate in what we see and much less in what we hear. To me, the sights I recall impress me much more. I have looked out an upstairs window in early morning to see Mom picking pears, pickles or perhaps a cantalope or a head of cabbage. Now watch close, if it's Sunday morning early, before Dad or I am up, she would carry her gifts and hide them along the hedge fence by King's road maybe at a tree or post or the gate, return to the house or go on to the barn, but at church she would be telling Frank Vian or Minnie King, Francis Clark or Aunt Bessie where to look. I've seen many folks stop along that hedge row from time to time. As pie was passed, no, she didn't want any, not until the meal concluded and some remained. These are messages that last.

When the bolt of lightening struck a tree killing several cows for John Brand, she was the only one who felt so sorry for him. Not illness, work or weather kept her from the church house. Every meeting, for whatever reason, day or nite, she was there. The ladies aid, the same. It was her habit and

I'm a better person today to have spent time in his presence.

Pearle Riggs was a small girl, fresh out of college. She came to Ashley to teach elementary students. In the classroom she was like a shepherd to a flock of sheep or a mother hen with her chicks. Noon or recess she was surrounded with eager kids, eager to talk to her because she gave such indication of love for each one. She did it. How we would crowd around Miss Riggs and she would tell us stories we'd never heard. There was none like her.

In those days there was no radio, television, few cars, no movies, at least for us, only home and back to school. She opened up a whole new world of wonder. She could tell stories at a level we could understand and almost see the things she would describe. Few of us, indeed, had seen a mountain, the Mississippi river or Yellowstone park.

When desks were clean and orderly and we had been "good" kids all day, she would save time to read us a poem or story. Our choice was one of two: "Little Orphan Annie" or "The Raggedy, Raggedy Man." Her readings with expressions were great. James Whitcomb Riley was a favorite. I will ever remember rides to school in her Studebaker convertible. She was a noble lady who gave her best to others and to me.

Fred Fredrick, the principal of the Ashley school was a great example in shaping lives of young men growing up in this community. He was a stern, tough disciplinarian yet enjoyed love and respect throughout our area. He could be harsh and administer punishment to the very degree of violation and yet the recipient held no ill will. He could discipline and retain friendship and respect. I believe his secret was he always made sure the one in question "had it coming" and was deserving and did not go beyond the need to get results. Regardless of the depth of the situation or the extent of punishment, he held not the slightest hint of grudge, none whatsoever. A rule was broken, it was dealt with properly. It was all past and over. While I had my experiences with Fred in those years, I held great respect for him. He was fair and that was evident.

Millie and I received invitations and were present at both of his retirement parties. He retired, took a 3 year trip around the world on a cargo ship, returned to be principal again. Only 14 were at the second retirement. We were asked to be there. He told of all the years and incidents of strong discipline of boys and never one time did he receive any retaliation toward him. I tried to use his methods of discipline in my school bus for 40 years. It worked!

There may be those who do not believe in God, the Creator, Designer, Planner, but I am not one of them. I believe plans are offered and we have been given free choices and responsibilities. I believe we are stronger after adversities. A strong wind makes a strong tree.

EXTRA DUTIES

I have been fortunate indeed to enjoy some opportunities that were wonderful learning experiences. There were none greater than serving six years on the Garrett Wee Haven School board. This school was a brainchild of Dr. Kanzer. He gave a great deal of time and talent to guide it to the lever of service he desired.

At the time of my appointment, there were other new members, one of which was a secretary to the good doctor. At the first meeting, there was the introduction and information needed to get on with the business at hand.

The doctor opened a letter from a state office and read aloud the contents. It stated in glowing terms how well the Garrett school was doing and reports they received now qualified it for great financial support. The school was now placed high on a list of such and no longer would members find the shortage of funds and be faced to do the various fund raising programs. There were added benefits also of equipment and hiring of teachers with Masters degrees. At the conclusion of that letter, I felt many pressing problems were taken over by the state office and the school would enter an era of easy living.

The doctor asked the new secretary to prepare for dictation as he would answer this letter immediately. He spoke slowly and

I could stay up late at nite when he came. He said he was on the back of the caboose one time. It was so hot he saw a coyote chase a jack rabbit and they were both walking. He told of mixing paint one time and used his wife's kitchen mixer. It made for wonderful conversations!

Kenneth Wierich, who at age 35 developed cancer, fought hard but was overcome. He told me again and again what he wanted was to live one more day. He gave me a sense of value of the new day, each day. I never forgot that and declare it so at daybreak, winter or summer.

Orval Casselman was always the same. He spoke no ill of another person and enjoyed the soo outdoors. A man of great faith in God and could handle great trials. His devotion to Myrtle and family, his dedication to his church and fellow man would make him one of the great pillars of the community. His common clothes or rumpled hair was camouflage for a great man.

From Earl Forrest, I learned to help anyone in need. Earl was never to busy to lend a hand. He wore a warm smile and enjoyed his family tremendously. There was no family who enjoyed community respect greater than the Forrest family.

Earl lived one half mile south of our house. The Forrest family contributed so much to our lives especially during the Great Depression. Earl was the father of a large and congenial family of boys and girls that set themselves apart from the average students by their witt and humor, their ability to work and have fun. Earl was proud of each one and while he could denounce an error, he was noted for praise of good work, a job well done was always rewarded with his expressions of praise and encouragement. I've always felt the success of this family grew, as the result.

Earl had the first car in our area and was generous in its use to help every neighbor in time of need. He was there. I liked Earl. Of course he made mistakes but "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Help someone each day, he did. I could write pages on this. He enjoyed his kids as few

others I knew and loved every one of them and took great pride in their achievements.

Earl was more modern in thought and act than most of our neighbors. He was ahead of the times. I'll always hold to my appreciation of him.

Clark Kelley dispensed a brand of humor that drew a hearty laugh. That was his objective saying it was the best and cheapest medicine for mankind. I learned that to be so true. I might have experienced a setback but he would insist that it was only temporary and what I needed was a good joke. By golly, it worked!

Felix DeWeldon came from Austria when a lad, in effort to escape to this country, hid himself aboard a ship until it was well to sea and made safe passage.

It was my privilege to live but a few miles from the Marine Academy in Harlingen, Texas the winter Mr. DeWeldon was there supervising the great job of reassembly of his Iwo Jima monument. It was the original mold he made to product the world famous statue in Washington, D.C. 27 years earlier. Having been cut in smaller pieces, requiring 13 semi-trucks to transport, now unloaded in a field he was inspecting piece by piece as it was rebuilt on the site in Harlingen after being in a storage warehouse since World War II.

I spent many days out there. It was a short bike ride and I enjoyed the experience. He was such an inspiration to be around as he told how he coustructed such detail of features and expressions from only a photo of Joe Rosenthal and what it did for the bond effort.

Here was a man, an imigrant, determined to be good at whatever he did. A dedicated man who wanted to be the "best he could be" and chose this profession.

I will always count it a privilege to have met Felix DeWeldon and watch him work and leave his mark of dedication in the great tribute that was erected at Harlingen. I think

moments of those days for me and a life long memory.

As garage work became more intense and my involvement in other activities grew, I decided to leave the school. I went to Garrett to see Noah Yoder. After a long talk with him, he agreed to take my place. He was close by the school and had interest in it and supported it with donations and was in a position to contribute much more than I. It was a rewarding six years and it gave me insight and gratitude before unknown.

It was about this time when a couple of fellows from Auburn called on me at the garage one day. They were not our usual customers; businessmen, well dressed and said they were needing names of prospects to form a hospital board at Auburn with the hope of some day building a new hospital there. What they asked me to do was this: While I lived at Waterloo and worked at Ashley, they wanted me to think of three people that I thought would be good for this project. I was to take two weeks and send them a letter on each one and why I submitted their names. My first choice was Robert Forrest. My next was Lawrence Richter and I can't recall the third. I wrote my reasons for each and their qualifications, their interests and influences. I mailed it as directed and a few days later received a notice they had met and had selected me. That always did amuse me and I wished I had copies of those letters to see why they did that.

From the earlier discussions to the plans submitted by the architect and all through the fund raising, those were interesting evening meetings. Somehow I felt that C.J. Maxton and Glenn Rieke along with Dick Frick would get the job done. The job as they set forth, was to build an adequate hospital from beginning to end; equip the facility, hire qualified staff and have funds to operate for one all with no tax money. No tax to our county which seemed impossible.

They got that job done. A great deal of credit must go to Mr. Maxton of Butler and to Glenn Rieke. They spent their own money on trip after trip and for phone call after phone call. No one knows how much time they were absent from their work. They went on and on with one goal in mind. DeKalb County will ever be indebted to those men for their far

sightedness and determination along with their ability to manage.

I told C.J. one day they would not need to build a monument to him. When that time came, he built his own and it stands as a tribute to his life.

Many stories might be told of that project but I feel they could be incorrect or less interesting to folks of coming years. I was of little help, mostly keeping folks up north informed of progress. There was a great deal of interest as Dr. Bonnell Souder was becoming less active and that facility declining.

I will relate one event as I remember it. The ground breaking past, fund raising behind, construction was now under way. A common practice before the meetings came to order was to review the proposed drawings and be well informed to answer questions that would arise. It also was a stimulation to imagine such a facility available to our community at that period of time. A drive to a Fort Wayne hospital took more time then than at the present.

One nite after looking over drawings of each floor and landscape, the meeting was called to order by Glenn for the purpose of selecting equipment. Hal Hoham meant no offence but merely dropped a statement that electrified the meeting. He said, "I'll bet Dr. Bonnell Souder will just have to close up her place when this is ready to go." Mr. Rieke called a halt to all discussions. "In the first place that facility of Dr. Bonnell's brought many of us here into the world. It served this community so faithfully all these years. I never want to hear a word such as that mentioned again. In the second place, I propose we pause right here and now. I will dictate a letter to her to this effect; We hereby offer to purchase any such item that Dr. Bonnell has and feels she would want to sell or dispose of and furthermore, Dr. Bonnell shall have a room if she desires to live here at the hospital, with no charges to her as long as she desires and has use for." Glenn spoke with authority and left no doubt in anyone's mind what he meant. When he called for a vote on this proposition, it was unanimous. I always felt it was an honor to be a member of that board at that time and yet today feel a pride as we come near.

deliberately and to my great astonishment, turned down each and all offers of financial support from the state office. This letter now was getting my attention and surprise and made me aware right there that I knew little of the needs.

I resolved to do the best I knew now and that was to keep quiet and listen. For once, it paid off. When the doctor finished a rather short answer, he asked the new secretary to read back the letter to him. She couldn't do it. Her shorthand was just that; too short. As she tried to read and became more nervous, he took over and restated word for word the entire letter and she made corrections and additions. So dedicated was this man he could recall word for word the earlier dictation. As he felt so strongly that he would not accept one penny from the state because of their power to dictate the rules from then on. One thing he feared most was state hiring practices requiring Masters degrees and all when he felt what we needed was people with warmth, love and compassion. We didn't need their brand of sophistication. It was from this incident that I was to become interested and found the next six years a rewarding work.

Those local women would sit with the individual child and teach them how to tie their shoes; over and over each day until they could do it. The glow of satisfaction was a sight I'd long remember.

For a number of years I was in charge of the ticket sales and raffle program at the DeKalb County Fair. I was told Mr. Norman Gerig would donate a nice big comfortable chair. He did this each year. The first year I was surprised to turn in my money only to find I had not paid Mr. Gerig for the chair! "But I thought it was donated." "Yes," they said, "It is. We paid the cost. The profit was donated."

Each year there would be an achievement nite and all that could be expected to perform in front of parents and friends. When you got to know the teachers and understood their dedication, when you learned to know the children and realize their restrictions, this nite became a real event.

I shall never forget a boy one nite who marched up front before his proud parents and friends and would write his numbers on

the board. As he walked directly to the front, I saw many things one by one. He had thick black hair, like a boy I knew 35 years ago. He had a smile of anticipation. There was a marked resemblance to myself in the third grade. I just stared at him and got a strange feeling -- "There but for the Grace of God go I." I did feel that perhaps his parents were wealthy for he had such nice clothes. His suit fit perfectly, a dark suit; maybe new and a white shirt with a blue tie. He was a picture of health and youth, well built and eager to take his place in this program. I saw no limitation at all as he picked up his chalk, turned and quickly began. The 1 came quickly, the 2 then the 3 with some hesitation. Now, more slowly he made his 4, the 5 was a task. I now could see the effort it required as he would make a little, then not satisfied, he would erase and begin again. He got that one and I breathed easier. The 6 he got in a short time but no 7 appeared. He studied his earlier numbers. He tried so hard to put the up the 7 number, but nothing looked right. Now I've seen people compete and fail and it seemed important. I've held my breath when the clock shows two seconds, score tied, and all eyes on the athlete but the ball rolls off. I've seen heartache at band contests and individuals fail at spelling contests, but this was different. I think because this boy wanted to do this so badly, I felt that could be me standing there and how close it was to that. All the other kids were pulling for him; room of parents, but more than that his mom and dad were near the front and by the right side of me watching and praying. Dr. Kanzer and all board members were present. It was a moment of stillness that I can hear yet. So charged was this situation that I began to cry and couldn't help it. Why, oh why, didn't someone go up and help him. His teacher or father, someone. All at once it came to him. Still all alone, he put down his 7 and went to the 8 with no hesitation. The 9 came with a little effort and the 10 was done quickly! All this time his back was to us staring at the blackboard. I don't know about him, but those few minutes seemed like hours for us, but with the 10 completed, he turned around and I cannot describe the great look of achievement. His class mates cheered. We clapped and people got to their feet. It was one of the great

What killed her? Lightning, hunger, maybe a hunter, or heart attack? That's up to you and your neighbors." He said, "That isn't your money and I've got a lawyer and we will see. I'm gonna get that cow paid for, you owe it to me." I never got word of a suit. He came in the garage now and then but finally gave up asking me for payment.

One day a man came in to see me, not a customer, but I knew him quite well. He told me to go to a particular sale barn and ask to look at their books back on the date of the stray cow. I did. They wouldn't tell me much but gave me their books. They did show me the activities of that week. Three days after the run away, which was four days before they found the carcass, they paid him some \$300 or \$400 or so for the stray cow from their insurance. He had cashed that check the next day and then he was after me.

Millie called the garage on a Friday or Saturday morning once. She said a poor family was at the house. They were frantic with a very, very sick child. Could I come home right away? They are in the bathroom now and the little girl is going into a coma. I said, "There is no use for me to come home. Send them down to Waterloo to Dr. Coleman right away. I'll call him to be ready and looking for them immediately." I heard no more for some time. I can't recall just whether he called me or I called him. The little girl had sleeping sickness, a very contagious type, and told us to wash the house thoroughly wherever they had been with the little girl. When I got home, Millie was already working on the bathroom as the girl had a problem there. Barb and Vince and Lori were coming on Sunday. Well, that evening we went to Ft. Wayne to the Lutheran hospital as Dr. Coleman gave her a shot and sent them on down there. I held my breath. You estimate and budget so much the year before and then hope you guess close. We got to Lutheran. They said they believed she would be alright. They would run tests in the morning. They told me the prompt action by the parents and also the quick diagnosis of the Waterloo doctor and the shot of anti whatever delayed the progress long enough for the trip to Ft. Wayne and get treatment started. I was glad for this news as I feared greatly she would require long, expensive treatment and become crippled if she survived. Three days

later she came home and after three or four more days, Millie and I drove down to their house to check on the little girl. She was out in the yard playing. That was just about one week later. It was almost unbelievable and the hospital bill, if I remember, was but \$1700.00. I could have put her off on the phone I suppose 'til I came home that evening. Then what? A cripple for life, a law suit. We were fortunate.

One day a lady knocked at our door. I answered the door. "Are you the trustee?", she asked. "Yes," I said. "Can I do something for you?" "Pay this" she blurted out as she handed me a slip of paper, an electric bill for \$144. I said, "Listen, I can't do that. If I could, I'd pay my own. Now I'll tell you what, I'll check on it Saturday morning and I'll come by and tell you what I can do." She insisted they were going to cut off service and it was cold weather. I called the utility and told them I'd pay the bill but before I did, I'd look into the situation and try to head off the same thing again. Well, after talking to the neighbors who were unhappy with her, for a number of reasons, I came by her house. She had little children. The husband left her living with his parents east of town. "Men would come and go day and nite", the neighbors said. "Some remained all nite and would leave for work from her house. Her husband was working but couldn't help because he was buying a truck! (With the kids, I had no choice but pay and pay if it came to that.) I told her I was going to pay this entire bill, "but if this happened again, I'd find out who sold her this house with no money down, who insured it with no money down, who is paying the taxes. I'm going to check the records of figures on this deal and the lawyers can run it thru and I'll put the entire story in the paper!" I don't know how she handled it all but I never heard a word after that. I thought I had outsmarted her and won a battle there but when I told our attorney, Warren Sunday, he said, "You had good luck. First off, you threatened her. Secondly, if you had printed one word in the paper, there would have been a law suit before the ink got dry." Good heavens -- he was right! I had more luck than sense.

When we finished the eight years as trustee, they had changed the law so one could serve as long as they were elected. We did have quite a number of requests for us to

Back about 1965 or '66, some folks asked me to run for township trustee. I agreed and conveniently forgot to tell Millie I had consented to such, by telling Jack Sanders I would do so. Well, it came out in the papers and Millie reads the papers. There was some conversation about that. I said, "We are getting along as we are. Maybe we could lay that little income back and do something special." Millie had spoken of a trip to Palestine and Israel from time to time. I said, "Maybe we could do that." Well, before we got much laid up, the the seven day war took place and we lost the desire to go. We decided to still do something special and as result, we ordered the 22 foot Winnebago motorhome in 1967. We didn't get it 'til the spring of 1968. The first trip, Ralph and Lola Phillips went along and we drove down to Purdue at West Lafayette as their son, John, was in college there. It was a nice week end and as spring can do, you just feel great. John joined us for lunch. Lola had a cake in the oven, I think. Anyhow, we all ate in it and declared it was a fun machine. In the spring, as trustee, we would take all our tax papers and drive to some camp ground and prepare assessment papers to turn in at Auburn. One nice thing there, it had no telephone!

With exceptions for, say once or twice a year when some emergency would appear, the trustee work was interesting. It was a good way to meet people and when you go door to door with the assessor's sheet, it was a privilege to learn the family structure and their objectives. It was work, but interesting. The farmers were carrying a disproportionate share of the tax burden mostly because real estate and farm machinery remained constant, profit or not, and all was visible. I had the impression only two farmers of our township would misrepresent things and they did each of the eight years I did that work.

Millie carried considerable burden those eight years because book keeping had to come out to the penny every time. There were so many categories and dispersements were many. Her money was always right on. Not one time was there a question. At the conclusion of the eight years, one of the state tax auditors said there was one strange thing with our township; we had nearly twice as

many dogs now in Smithfield and that he could understand, but there were only two females. I encouraged everyone to turn in their dog or dogs and so we increased the dog money so much they never questioned my guessing all were males for a \$1 fee. Females were \$3. All the money left at the end of the year went to Purdue for research. We always paid any claims first but they were few. One Christmas nite, the phone rang. Ray Myers called to say, "Bring your shotgun. Come right away. Dogs have been in our chickens and killed a lot of them. We can track the dogs." I should have said, "Go get 'em." I took a look in the coop. It looked like 40 or 50 chickens were dead and shut the door, told Ray, "Get the neighbors to see them, count them and then come to the house, but now we best track the dogs." Ray, his son and I found the dogs in an empty barn a half mile away. I looked in with the flash light and said, "I can't shoot them, they are tame. You watch the door, I'll catch them and hand them out." I did. One, two, three, the last one was a big Collie and I carried it out. We were going to put them in bags and I was going to take them to the vet at Auburn. I had my gun in my left hand, dog on my right with his head near my shoulder. We hadn't walked 20 steps 'til my dog let out a yelp and bit me in the neck below my ear. I dropped the dog. The other two did bark and jump. All three were on the ground running. The guns were firing and we killed the dog there in the snow of the farm yard. I was bleeding somewhat. Ray's wife called Dr. Coleman, in the nite now, he met me at the office and said I had a close call as the big dog had cut my neck open 'til he could see my jugular vein. He said, "A quarter of an inch more and you wouldn't be here now." I didn't get a Tetnus shot as the dogs were not in question -- my common sense was!.

One farmer requested I pay, from the dog money, for a cow that ran off while loading for the sale barn. He said a dog barked and frightened her. I had to have proof and resisted. One week later they found the cow dead in a woods nearby. He said he had proof, "Just come out and see for yourself." I said, "I believe you. I don't need to see the dead cow but I do need two neighbors to swear she died from the dog." He was really mad and threatened to sue me. "No," I said, "I can't write a check because the cow ran away.

continue, but I thought Millie had done enough so we quit. The Democrat committee then decided I should run for Sheriff. I did not consider this for a moment. The wife of the Sheriff is the jail matron and the work connected with this is tremendous. It is confining and requires dedication. They insisted over and over but I said "NO". Then Jack Sanders put me down for County Council. He said he had to do something. We served two terms in that position. I believe Kirk Carpenter and I were the only two Democrats elected one year and I may have been the only one the following term, I can't recall. We laughed about it. The Democrat party insisted I ride in the DeKalb County Fair Parade on Saturday. That day I was in Canada with a van load on the Algoma train for Rex Hile. Walt Greenwood, of Ashley, came down and rode a Suburban with Millie; banners, streamers and heavy tinted glass. They rode the parade route waving to all. I was 350 miles away in Agawa Canyon. I might not have been elected if I had been there. It was better this way. Walt told me if I was elected now, I'd have to give him a percent or he would tell. A public official just can't get away with anything! The work was interesting all eight years. They made me a liason agent for the board to the Welfare Board and Plan Commission all eight years. I attended both board meetings. The County Council would meet the first week, the Welfare Board the second week, the Planning Commission the third week then a week off and it began again. One thing it did was keep me informed of local happenings.

The County Council was first under the direction of Ron Feller. He did a super job of guiding the board thru county problems - all non-partisan. The board never did identify with party politics thru the eight years, but unfortunately, it was to show up at the last two meetings over the election of an unworthy, unqualified man running for Sheriff. I'm sorry that happened because it was such a good group working with harmony. Each one tried to get out between meetings and check over upcoming problems so they would be qualified to vote wisely.

One day I was putting gas in the car when Mr. Hile drove up along the pumps nearby. He asked what I was doing now since I had no job. He said, "Why don't you come

help us?" So it was always, almost always, fun and interesting work. I wish I had worked up there during the summers long ago. I enjoyed the people, the opportunities, the experiences. Only one problem was when I was taking a wealthy man from Ft. Wayne to Chicago's O'Hare airport. He was the only passenger and was a nice guy. The van stalled on the Dan Ryan Expressway with a fuel vapor lock. It was over 100°, I think. The traffic was so thick and fast I couldn't open the door to get out. What a time, but I finally got him on the plane in time for him to begin his couple of month trip to Europe.

One time Rex gave me a handful of checks signed with no amount filled in. He told me there were four handicapped folks who were afraid to travel in a group. He wanted me to take them on a tour thru southern Indiana or wherever they wanted to go for four days. We had fun. We just wandered around. At the Brown County Lodge, they let me drive right up to the door across the lawn. These folks had never seen a football stadium. We were driving thru Indiana University and drove in the stadium as far as they would allow. The view was good. We drive around the city of Columbus, Indiana and saw the Frank Lloyd buildings. I bought a hat for that trip but didn't wear it. One lady liked it and wore it all four days, so I gave it to her.

One nite after a long busy day, in Canada, we stayed at a brand new Holiday Inn. It rained like mad. We just got to bed and were sleeping good. About midnite, and all heck broke loose. Bells rang, sirens blew, there was pounding on the door. I jumped up, opened the door and the bell boy said "Fire! Get downstairs. Don't use the elevators." I pulled on my pants and shoes and went out in the hall. I said, "Go on up to the next floor and I'll alert the folks here." I got all but one man out. He wouldn't budge, so I herded all the other people downstairs and was going back for him. Alarms were sounding everywhere. You couldn't talk. Then the alarms were suddenly quiet and the truth came out. Water had run into the systems and shorted the whole alarm. There was no fire! The manager was so sorry. He had the folks on hand clear the kitchen of doughnuts, rolls, coffee, some fruit and goodies for a

lobby party. Now I want to tell you, in the crowd, I had a hard time picking out my group. Folks look a bit different at 1 a.m. with nite shirts, long gowns, barefooted, no teeth, no pocketbooks, no beads, no jewelry, hair unkempt! It was a sight. Then everyone began to laugh at one another and at themselves. It was a time to remember.

Golden (Mrs. Hile) was escort guide on a mystery trip thru Toledo, Ohio and Michigan one week an interesting time. I was going to bed one nite when the phone rang. Just when I thought everyone was tucked in and it would be a quiet time -- "Gene, can you come to 213? I can't work this air or something." I went down. They had a party planned for me. They had little gifts. Thirteen people in a little room on two beds and two chairs. I had to leave in the morning as I would meet a fresh driver at 10 a.m. to continue their tour. I had to get home for something that evening. One of the most rewarding trips for Millie and I was when we took some handicapped children and sponsor to the East coast. There was a caravan of us and these handicapped kids put on a program at a college campus out there. That trip alone would fill a fair sized book. A stop at McDonalds would take us two to three hours everytime. We learned so much. We took the children thru the outskirts of Philadelphia. The campus provided rooms for them while Millie and I went to a motel some distance away. Each van had their designated students and adults to supervise. It was almost a one on one balance. I always felt I should help them on and off. That was a no no for some. You could be nearby if needed, but don't lend a hand. One determined girl, so handicapped, really resented the smell of sympathy or the indication of help and was in and out of those vans so often. It was a great program. There must have been long hours of preparation. The one who impressed me the most was a little girl, pretty as a movie star, dressed so beautifully yet seemed so perfect and capable on stage acting. She sang a song or two beautifully with the piano. Even after the show when people were walking out she would be singing one or two more yet could hear no sounds herself. I could not believe what I was hearing and seeing. Her sponsor said if she could put one hand on the piano to touch it or

as she did once, sit on it she could do it. She did. We'll never forget that.

We left Philidelphia after driving around to see the sights; shipyards, Liberty Bell, the gardens and so on. I think we got away about 10 a.m. and never got a room or stopped for refreshment. Many were wheelchair patients and had to go one at a time in the restroom then wash afterward. This would make a pit-stop a two hour or more effort.

I would drive down to Kokomo early in the morning leaving home at 3:30 a.m. and arrive there at 5:30, freshen up, eat a bite and go to the Delco Goodtimes club at 6:a.m. They often would go to Cincinatti to a ball game. I didn't care for the games so I sat in the van and read or perhaps watched an inning or two. One time Millie Lepley gave me 15 tickets that she had left over. She told me to sell them, if I could or if not it was OK. I stopped along the street before we got to the ball park and sold two or three before a policeman came along and said we should keep moving. I drove slowly along the curb and a guy in the front seat would holler out what we had. We sold 'em all clean out just before we entered the gate.

Dog races and horse races were frequent trips also. I would watch a race or two but that's all. I just didn't care for the dogs running at all. I thought that it would be something different but after the second race, I went back to the van.

I made a couple of interesting trips to Wheeling, West Virginia. There were so many interesting things there. After a day or two at the races the guide would board the van and give us an informative guided tour of the city. I remember a man ahead with a rented U-Haul truck that tried to go thru a bridge that had a beig steel I-beam welded in place to restrict such units. There were signs along the way warning of it. He was going fast enough to go thru the first one onto the bridge. There he was inside, or most of him was. The top of the truck was cut off and the road was blocked for hours.

One year when school was out in the spring, we fired up the motor home and took a trip. We were gone a week or so. When we returned Art Rahe called to say the State Office of Education was trying to locate us. I couldn't imagine why. They called that day to see if I could join their road staff to travel to

schools and carry their safety meetings to 5800 school bus drivers. Well, of course I did.

I would consider Willis Goble, of Columbia City, my boss and another associate, Willard Simcox, of LePort. The three of us would speak on related subjects at selected schools where the drivers could meet on dates established. All the drivers were then required to attend. They received a day's pay for their time.

The administration was solid Republican but Willis Goble was solid Democrat. I wondered how he could keep that job. Well, it was by his work and following the rules. There was another crew to touch all schools south of Indianapolis. We would do all the schools north to Illinois, Michigan and Ohio. Members of the office and crew south didn't like Willis to hold the position he had. Eventhough he was the only Democrat, he felt quite secure because he did his work was well. He would follow orders to the letter. He answered to Richard Pea, of Indianapolis, an Indian and a workaholic. Mr. Pea wanted things done right, exactly as he said, and Willy did 'em!

I enjoyed the work immensely. I met new folks daily. It was so stimulating. Mr. Pea told us to be at the designated school by 8 a.m. We were there by 7:30 and had all the material out, projectors set up, blackboards ready, rooms checked out so we were familiar with each class location and restrooms. We were to be prepared to answer question as folks came in. Willy trusted me. He liked me and would tease me and do the darndest things to me. He liked to get me in hot water now and then just to see me sweat. One time during one of Willy's sessions, I was idle outside the door. I'd watched him often off stage and he would have me run the projector for him. It was a tough job. He wanted no slip-ups and said so. I saw an old man trying to carry some musical instruments into the school. I was busy at the time so just helped him in. Willy stopped his presentation then apologized to the 300 or so men and women. He told them "Reinoehl had arranged something, I don't know what now, that's the way it's been this year!" He put the old man, a one man band, on stage and he played for 15 minutes blaming me. That evening on the way back to the

motel, how he laughed. He had asked the old fellow, a friend, to come anytime. He entered my room one nite near bedtime at the Holiday Inn at Merrville and said he would show me something. What he did was load a vibrator massage machine, in the bed under the mattress, with beer tabs so it would run for an hour. (It was supposed to be fed quarters only.) I didn't like it so I slept in the other bed. The room was in my name and feared the manager would raise the dickens but Willy said he didn't think they would know who put the slugs in the machine. About a week later, I overheard Willy and Simcox, who he called "Calhoun" talking in the hallway. I could tell they were talking about me as they changed the subject as I neered. I heard something about a letter but couldn't make out anything else. I asked Willy, as he and I traveled together, and Mr. Simcox. He told me Willy got a letter from Dick Peas' office about the jambed machine over at the Merrville motel. They let me cook a day or two then I learned it was a joke. Nothing to it at all. How Willy would laugh.

Sometimes we would leave Columbia City at 6:15 to 6:30 a.m. I had to be over there before that with my stuff as I went with him. It made long days. Our motels were the best ones and we often stayed out overnite but we both liked to get home if we could. It made my day two hours longer but it was interesting work. We would have lunch each day in the best restaurant selected by the local administration with principals, superintendents and members of the State Police who attended each day. There was a different trooper each day and that made good conversation and one learned what was going on right up to date.

There was a nudist camp somewhere northwest and Willy went way out of his way to go past it one late afternoon on the way to our next town. Then he told the crews the next day how I drove him over there everytime we got anywhere near. He could make it so sincere. That was his greatest pleasure. He would set up at nite and make my daily reports. I never made a one. By the end of the week he had mine all made; the speeches I'd completed, where my time and every mile I drove and rode were all ready for me to sign. I never made a report. He

said they had to be just so or they would come back and it would delay my check.

I would speak on discipline in the forenoons and emergencies, especially fire, in the afternoon. Often, the local fire chief would be there and I could use him for a time and it would help keep things moving. Usually we would talk to half or a third of the group then they would go on to the next speaker and his program. The day went fast as you were so busy and the evening was a welcome time in the motel with a newspaper or TV -- no shoes, just relax.

Mr. Pea would drop in anytime and every now and then he liked to get out of the Indianapolis office and sit in on a session, especially on mine! I was a new man, I suppose. Willy got me the job. He was a Democrat, so was I. We were the only two and I would guess Mr. Pea got some static over that action so he wanted to know that I was doing the job. Sometimes the room would be dark as I was running a movie, and the lights would come on and I'd see him. He wrote me letters and encouraged me. We got along well. The second year he asked me early to help again. He sent me selected material of all kinds and told me what to say at each session. The next day he wrote me a personal letter and said to look over the material but disregard the speeches and just make up my own as I wished. I kept that one. He sent me copies of letters he received from superintendents and drivers, too. I appreciated them. The most appreciated came from a lady in New Haven. She went to some length to encourage Dick to include me on the office staff and so on. I met her the second year as we toured the area but I can't recall her name now. Mr Pea died suddenly of a massive heart attack and the state changed the program. I enjoyed those two years and feel indebted to Art Rahe and Willy Goble for their confidence and support that let to such rewarding work.

James Watson, Ph. D., superintendent of the DeKalb Central schools, had met with the school superintendents and principals of DeKalb, Noble, Steuben and LaGrange counties. They represented 12 major school districts and offered me the job of teaching the new drivers basic information to qualify as bus drivers. It was a good program. I liked it. The state required training for each

new person before the insurance company would accept responsibility. This was an experience in the actual teaching a class of new prospects. They were not bus drivers when they came and some, not many, but some never would be. The schools paid for each student so they were trying to screen out those who were not qualified and took applications only of those who were qualified..

This was different work. It was a job to prepare a different lesson each nite and answer questions but here one had a receptive individual because they wanted to be there and learn. In the safety meeting, they had to be. Here they were early, asking questions they feared to ask during class time. There was eagerness to learn, to know, to prepare for the unknown, the awesome responsibility.

Eventhough there were just 12 major schools that we were to accomodate, we did take students from other areas also. There were quite a number from Allen county. Dr. Watson was smart when he suggested we keep class sizes to 20. We didn't always, but we tried. The big classes never went as well.

Sometimes, but not often, I'd travel out of our district to teach. I would go to other areas, like Ft. Wayne, if an instructor was ill. There were 42 in one Ft. Wayne class and for three nites I drove down there to qualify drivers for the school term about to begin.

This work was more exhausting than merely speaking for the state. Teaching, leading a student step by step thru discipline, thru the skills of driving, the needs for cooperation with school and parents was demanding and required carefully chosen words and advice. I was well aware this was a new generation and could say only that which was inside the law because one word of careless advice could come back to haunt a person or even be the root of a law suit.

Many school teachers took the course. As a rule, they were a good bunch. They were aware of all the pitfalls and knew the goals and were very cooperative. I enjoyed the teachers, with few exceptions. It was not unusual to have a school principal or two in a class. They were there for the same reason, to pick up on anything new and get a wider picture on transportation. One

"My first question is what do you teach in your class? Who is to blame?" "I teach the law. The operator is to blame if she knowingly felt the bus was unsafe. She should not have driven it out. The law says she should have parked it." He asked, "Who do you feel is to blame?" "I'd like to know her age, experience and judgment, her past record as a driver and mother but if she was young and inexperienced and new, there is no question that those men took advantage of her. The two seasoned employees, you called mechanics, manipulated her and so avoided their own responsibility and thus must share the greater percent of this result. I believe they are greatly to blame." "Well," he said, "This may not go to court, I don't know, but I am to be present at a school and parent meeting on Tuesday evening in Angola and I'll need this information with me." This situation pointed out the need for protective insurance and present, constant care in word and understanding.

While Barbara became interested in music as the result of the teaching of Edith Suda, Millie and I got a great kick out of her progress. Millie made more trips than I to various contests when held in the daytime, and it was always rewarding. The two Barbs, Reihoehl and Bowman, played their saxophones here, there and everywhere.

Involvement, of course, lead to becoming president of the P.T.A. With no money, we kicked around some old fund raising ideas but none seemed new. We decided to hold an auction to raise money for playground equipment. Walter Holsinger, of Ashley, did a great job and we raised barely enough to order the big entertainment unit we chose from a catalogue. One nite during supper, the phone rang. It was Mrs. Paul Miller. Catherine said that her ladies' club was meeting at 7:30 and if I would come and tell them of our need, they likely would vote to give us some money. I said, "I'll be right over!" Millie said, "What are you going to tell them? You have enough already." "I'll think of something on the way. I'd like to have their money, too." I walked into the house where almost two rooms of neighbor ladies sat. They gave me the floor. I reviewed our efforts and final auction results and told them we had reached just enough to

order what we had planned for so long, but I had a most important message for them. "True, we now have reached just enough to order this unit. It is the cheaper and lighter one. We did not consider the better one because of the higher cost. I'd guess there are those who have had need for a new blouse or skirt and after deliberation may have purchased the cheaper one. Maybe it didn't fit as well; cut wrong under the arms or the buttons pulled off, a disappointment and waste of hard earned money. Then you threw away the \$1.65 blouse and went back and paid \$2.75 for the better blouse making the cost to you near \$4.00 but you liked it better and wore it for years. It seems to me you ladies could realize great satisfaction with providing us the amount of money to make it possible to buy the best unit in that catalogue." Well, my speech attained the desired results. They donated their entire treasury to purchase the better remained in service 'til a new school was erected years later.

I remained in service 'til a new school was erected years later.

CHURCH LIFE

My earliest recollections of going to church was walking home at nite in the dark with my mother. She would walk slow so I could keep up. It was always so dark. The church had lights inside so one could see quite well but the moment you stepped out, it was dark until you stepped up on the porch at the house. We were always walking back and forth, it seemed.

There were not a lot of kids in church in those days. It seems to me there were but three to six in Mayme Allomong's class, where I was. Mayme was perhaps Mom's best friend at church and they had much to talk about. They had gone to school, gone to church and grew up together becoming close friends. Mayme was a very good teacher. Her only child, Wayne, was a slight bit younger than me but we were in her class.

Mayme was such an interesting teacher. It may, in part, be at that age and time, children were huntry to learn at every opportunity. Picture little travel, no radio, no television, very little library work; those

superintendent of a LaGrange school attended and then required every employee to attend. Each year, any newly hired people were there; cafeteria workers, custodians and office workers. I appreciated their confidence.

One state trooper attended all sessions. He came one nite and listened in and decided to go to all classes. We had a friendly disagreement one nite to the enjoyment of the class members. We were discussing how to handle the bus in various weather and road conditions. Because of his training and background experience, I had asked him to hold up his hand if I made any statement that he questioned either in point of law or judgement. One nite he did! We were discussing driving on ice with the loaded bus. I wanted to impress them well in the short time we had, that they could not blame the ice if they slid into another vehicle or such. To do so quickly, I said, "The ice never caused an accident; the fog never did. Your failure to judge and react causes the accident. Ten cars will cross that icy patch and not have a wreck. The eleventh one goes over the bridge, it's not the ice." It gets them to thinking and I found it an effective way to make the point stick. The trooper put up his hand so he and I had a friendly debate in front of the class. It was interesting and that class became well informed on that subject but all went well.

The state office called me one time to see if I would go to the LaGrange area to visit the Howe Military School as they had requested the driving course there. Seems those teachers had to drive their buses to ball games and any traveling activity and the law required them to be qualified. I went there to see about it and agreed to travel there and hold classes from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. It was different. They were mostly retired officers of the Armed Services; men with stars, stripes and all in uniform. They were attentive and respectful, but it was different. There were no young people as I was accustomed. The first class I held, I learned the headmaster had a handicapped son. They chose him to present me with a white sweater of Howe Military when we completed the course. He was a kind and generous man and a hard worker too. It was the most exhausting class I ever had. First off, I

would work all day at something then drive to Howe and set up for the class. We never took the usual 10 minute breaks every hour in order to complete the required time sooner, also I could never relax in front of those men as I could in the home classes. Their experiences were intimidating and I was playing "on their court". I couldn't get loaded up and out of there 'til 11 p.m. I returned a year or so later. I recall they were a good bunch of men. One nite, coming home, I decided to go south through LaGrange instead of east on 120 as was usual. This was a mistake. As I drove south of the academy, I was so weary and tired I reached down and turned off the dash lights to reduce glare and give my eyes a rest. In LaGrange, a car came up behind with big red flashing lites. I pulled over and the trooper said that I came into town going 45 in a 35 mph zone. "I've checked you out and see you've never been ticketed." "No," I said, "I guess I've deserved them but never....." "Well, you're going to get one now." I went home a different route from then on.

One day I was working on the lawn and a state trooper drove in. He said he would like to ask me some questions and wanted me to know he would be putting the whole conversation on tape as he needed it all recorded. He informed me that there was a school bus problem and he may appear in court and would need evidence. He said there had been a bus accident. No one was hurt but a real controversy had arisen and he needed my input. It seems, as he told me, the story is a bus driver took her bus to the mechanic and reported a brake problem. He drove it and said it was of no real concern and to continue on driving it. The following day, she returned and said it was worse. He instructed her to go ahead, that it was nothing to make trouble. She made a third trip and this time there were two men there and they discussed her problem and decided they would work on it at the next opportunity but had no spare bus and to go on the rest of the week as is. Well, it got away from her on a gravel road and went into the ditch and back up on the road again before she could stop it. There were scared kids, bumped heads and a scratched arm but no serious injuries. Well, parents lined up at school, phones rang and there were several ideas on who was to blame. "Now," he said,

things were not present to compete for the little mind. The world then is small for children but doors were opening all around and Mayme Allomong opened the door to the Bible. She could tell the stories in such a way that exercised one's imagination from her descriptions of Noah's ark, Little David and Goliath, Daniel in the den of lions, the very creation of the universe and the formation of our earth, to Jesus healing the sick and blind. Every Sunday, her lessons were easy to understand and she made them so real.

At that time, the church membership was not as large as now but nevertheless, it was a working group. They managed to hold meetings in the spring and fall. Some of the evangelistic preachers were very innovative with little side acts of interest. Some played musical instruments and one time a preacher had a two foot wide paper hanging from the wire in front of the stage. He lit it with a match and Bible words appeared from treated areas.

Heating and lighting were constantly demanding attention. The wood furnace required refueling often but it heated the room more evenly than the first two stove installed on each side of the room. The furnace was set in the basement directly beneath the front edge of the platform. There was one large register about four foot square. Now the janitor would start fire early on Sunday morning. The furnace would get so hot the big dome above the firepot would turn cherry red. The heat from it was terrific. As folks would enter one by one, they made their way to the front to warm up. One had to stand on the narrow around the edge or it could burn your footwear. The register was that hot. It was a place to visit 'til church started then everyone would go back to the seats but folks often wore their warm coats thru the Sunday School song session. The high ceilings were an aid in summer heat but of little help in cold weather. Fire was maintained all day to assure warmth for the Sunday evening service. After the service, the fire was allowed to burn out and the building became cold by midnite and remained that way until the next Sunday.

Dad was the janitor for a time and he would go over to church on Saturday nite in cold weather to start a moderate fire. That

helped if they had coal to mix in so it would hold heat all nite and the wind was not too strong.

I went with Dad one evening to attend a church board meeting. The main discussion, I recall, was setting a date to cut wood for the church and to raise money to buy 5 ton of coal. At that time, board members got together with crosscut saws and axes to cut and haul green wood for the furnace. To use green wood required some coal mixed in and the two together made a very hot fire. The fire could be banked to last much longer than dry wood alone. They talked of the need for \$25 to cover the \$5 per ton that year. They dumped it outdoors on the north side of the building later removing a window and piling as needed into the coal bin.

I don't recall the kerosene lamps that served the early church. The lights I remember were gas mantle lamps and made an acceptable light. In the basement at the northeast corner was a small room six foot square. There was a place to contain a limited amount of white gas. A tank held a quantity of air and by hand pumping, the janitor could raise the air pressure and force the gas/air mixture thru a series of pipes to the upstairs which hung down to support four separate lights. There were two mantles on each lite. Once the janitor got pressure pumped up, he then would go upstairs to light the lamps. He had to place a board upon the back rests under the lamp to be lit. Then he would lite a wick on the end of a wire hook. It would hang under the mantles to generate enough heat. After a warm-up of two minutes or so, he would turn on the gas into the mantle. The fumes would burn on the fragil little sack emitting light. This procedure would be required at each of the four lights. It was a little chore that required some dexterity. There was a problem, however. The mantles were ever so fragil and the slightest bump or breeze meant replacement was needed. The mantle wouldn't burn if not completely intact. Clarence King operated the lights for a number of years and understood the system. He sat near the rear of the church and was alert to a regular need and kept an eye on the lights at all times. If he saw them dim down the least bit he would hurry to the basement and frantically pump up pressure before the

light would go out. Usually they would get dim and give a weak yellow light until he got the pressure up. Once in a while they would go out plunging the church into total darkness. A few men would help Clarence then. With lights of a lantern or two, all lamps were turned off to prevent pressure loss then began the re-light procedure. As lights came on, church service would begin where it had left off. Sometimes as the lights would dim, I'd see Clarence head for the basement door and I'd slip out and go with him. He would let me hold the lantern while he vigorously pumped up pressure. When the gauge got where he wanted, he would set the lantern on the wall by the basement door and we would join the congregation.

When the R.E.M.C. came thru with the electric poles and finally strung the heavy cable, all rejoiced. The church was wired and had instant lights; even an outdoor security light was added. It was a strange thing when the farm residences got electric lights. You could see houses all around at nite. It was just unbelievable. Pole lights sprung up at house and barnyards. To go down the road at nite was exciting now to see the lights. Sometimes the house lights were on in several rooms at a time. Barns, hog houses, chicken coops could be lit instantly. To Mom it was near heaven, but it was not immediate for us and would come later.

There was another little chore for the janitor at the old church. I don't know how I could forget it. The windows were long and slim with the two sections, one above the other, making them very high. Where the upper sash and lower sash met was a moon-shaped lock to secure the window upper and lower pane. Now in hot weather, we kids would like the lower sash raised up and would prop it up with a book or stick but some of the older folks objected and directed the janitor to pull the top sash down instead to avoid a draft. This was accomplished by means of a long pole with a steel prong, at a right angle, that fit into a hole in the top of the upper sash. The janitor would release the lock and push the pole up the window to the utmost height. Now the trick was to insert the steel prong into a nail-like hole and when you did, you had to push it in the full depth before you tried to pull down on the pole. Once the steel prong was inserted full depth, the janitor

would begin to pull down increasing the effort more and more yet gently for here was a surprise. Sometimes the windows would come down quite easily and sometimes it was so difficult that when he would increase the pull more and more, it still might refuse and the prong would bend enough to come out of the hole and being under pressure, the pole and prong would hit the glass window and it would crack like a shot. It would interrupt a class, a song service, a sermon, a funeral, communion, a wedding, programs etc. You never knew which window would be uncooperative that day!

While the church attendance was not large, it seemed the attendance remained almost the same. Vians, Kings, Benjamins, Myers, Albrights. It was always the same ones. They sat in their same seats and I think they could have located each other in the dark. I could be wrong but I recall the attendance to be around 34, 37 to 41 like that. Frank Vian and Carl Tompson were the main posts that held up the congregation with everyone in there helping.

There was a row of sheds and shelters on the north side of the church where the horses were kept. They were open on the south side so the horses were driven in and tied. It broke the wind and if the horses were covered with a blanket, it was quite OK. These structures were torn down when the automobile became the way to travel but one building remained for many, many years.

In the northwest corner of the lot was the little square building that accomodated any of us that had a need. I don't think the modern terms would fit eg. bathroom or restroom. There is something about those words that just doesn't seem right. It was the toilet, or as most of our area folks called it, the out-house. It was made of rough lumber, far from air tight. The door would close but light came in on three sides. It was always cold, always. How, I don't know. The holes needed were sawn out by a craftsman with a hand saw from a smooth and polished wide board. With thoughtful measure, he properly spaced three holes in different sizes and shapes. Now I should be careful about commenting about its accomodations because it served the needs of men, women and children for many, many years with little or no up-keep. The janitor often would shovel a

path to the little house to accomodate the ladies who had need to take their children out there but much of the time, one waded in the snow and worked the door open when you arrived. It was a great improvement when, in the 1930's, the W.P.A. built hundreds of new toilets and stored some in the church yard for a time, so the church board arranged for one and they set it near the church by the back door. It was at the west end of the church at the back door that accomodated both basement and upstairs. Just off to the side a bit and near the church, they placed the new service unit. The ladies appreciated it, for it was long overdue and the need was so great. It was close to the church, the door closed well. It was set upon a cement slab and bolted down. The hinges, lock, door knob all worked. It was also serviced more regular by the janitor with generous applications of lime and held less offensive odors.

The front of the church had a number of steps to gain entrance through two large doors. When the church building was constructed, it was nearly level with the ground. It had no basement. As the attendance gradually grew the group decided there was need for classrooms and the building was then raised, a basement dug, concrete floor and walls making twice the square footage and children attended classes there. The furnace took some room at the west end along with fuel bins and supply areas but there was adequate space now for growth.

The huge cement steps on the front were some wider than the double doors. The steps had iron pipe on either side for handrails. This entrance served the church well for many years before a new front entrance was built that offered shelter from the weather and protected the sanctuary. Before, if someone came in late or had to leave for any reason, the door was opened and the east wind swept in to disrupt service.

The church was the center of community affairs and it became the center for young people of dating age for they continued meetings, lessons, programs and with the absence of entertainment in those days, youth groups were often there.

Sunday School picnics were frequent. Holiday programs and such with Children's

Day in June being the big one. When I was in class then, every class and every student had a part. All the youth had parts in plays, songs and recitations making this an interesting time.

In those early days, the youth of the church became very much a part of the church accepting responsibility in programs and building attendance. The church attendance grew, not rapidly, but steady growth saw the attendance become stable. While the numbers were less than the present time, it reflected little variance from week to week. Extremely bad weather would take its toll, however. The church was always opened on Sunday morning for a time.

Clarence King would open early while yet dark and get the fire going. Frank Vian would come early, too. He walked to church from the home place wearing a big warm fur coat and boots. He would be one of the first there. When the storms would go thru, sometimes only five or six people would make it. They would stand around the furnace and wait 'til well after 9:30 before they would start the trek home. If there were fifteen or such, there would be a Sunday School, lesson and communion and folks would go home early. Effort was made each Sunday morning to have the church open and folks knew if they got there, it would be warm and someone would be there waiting. If the teacher didn't make it, someone taught. If the preacher didn't make it, one of the elders would preach and so it was that a strong church grew up.

The young folks I remember as always working for the church were Chester Vian and Irene King. There were others, but these two taught classes from their early youth. There were no more faithful workers than these. Chester did whatever there was a need, not only did he teach classes, he held mid-week meetings at his house conducting teacher training classes. He made great effort to teach others the need and the art of teaching. Irene accepted responsibilities throughout the church and Ladies Aid. She went to college for a time, but only that short period was she absent, for upon return from training she chose to teach school in the area so she could carry on the church work. The Cedar Lake church owes much to these two people. While Chester is no longer active and in declining

health, he remains no less in the history of Cedar Lake and while Irene is not active in teaching at this time, she never misses a Sunday and misses very, very few activities. She never misses a Ladies Aid.

The Ladies Aid group was a strong, strong force in church life during my childhood. There are many stories that could be told of happenings around the Ladies Aid meetings. I'll set forth a few so that the picture may be complete. Largely it will be happening to us kids who always went along when mom attended.

Clarence and Hester King lived west of us nearly a half mile but their house was up on top of a big hill making it very prominent to us. Each time you stepped from our back door you could see their place as the barn and all buildings were so visible to us with no big trees or buildings between. When I was yet small, they moved into a machine shed south of their house and proceeded to tear down the old house. They lived in the machine shed throughout that summer and quite well, too. Hester had rugs over the dirt floor and had things quite liveable. She was noted for cleanliness. There were four of them as Roy and Irene were yet elementary age. When at last the new house was completed, it was made largely of blocks. Clarence included a revolutionary lighting system. It was a Delco system composed of a gas engine driving a generator which would charge a long row of wet batteries that supplied electric current to the house, barn and out buildings. It also did one great thing. It pumped water at the flip of a switch making water pressure in the house with its related advantages and water to the barn to benefit the livestock. It was a good serviceable arrangement at that time. The engine generator had to run much of the time and could be heard all around but it was nothing when compared with the many advantages it produced.

Hester had a high pitched voice that carried well. It was not uncommon for us to hear her call the men for dinner, in part because we were lower and had few trees. We would hear her call Clarence to the phone or such things. It was not uncommon to hear them call livestock for feeding or for evening care.

We all looked forward to the first time Hester would have the Ladies Aid meeting at

her house. It was the custom for the ladies to take turns entertaining the group each month. Well, Kings was always a good place to go. Hester was a great host and always was smiling and in good spirits. The women were sure to attend that day. She set up two quilts for the lady folks to get around to work and yet there were more attending than there was room for so they had to take turns. While they were busy quilting, I was investigating all the new things. Someone was working at the sink. I was on the floor under the table. I spied a small rectangular thing on the wall near the floor. It had two little brass doors. What were they? I opened one. There was a hole. I stuck my finger in! I let out a yell and ladies came from both rooms to see now what happened only once! Only once was needed. My memory had served me well there and required no more experimenting. While the King's house had many new innovations, the outdoors did also. Roy was somewhat older than I was and quite adept at doing chores and tending the livestock. Before he was old enough to work a team in the field, he was looking after their young cattle. He would sort out a pair of little calves and train them to drive. He had harnesses for them, collars to wear, halters to guide and lines to drive. He attached tugs on either side and harnessed up two side by side. When he got that done, he trained them to pull a small wagon. He was clever with them and without yelling and shouting, they would obey. With a "giddap" they would move ahead together; a tug on the line and call of "gee" or "haw" was all that was needed to guide them. He would haul wood, dirt, and on Ladies Aid day, give us kids a ride. That was fun. This went on for some time and I looked forward to going up there.

One of the amusing stories there, one that Mom laughed about over and over, took place at noontime. In those days, a number of men would come to eat dinner with the ladies at noon. It was a carry-in dinner with each bringing a choice goodie. Now the man of the house always ate with the group and when there were those retired or living nearby and could, they would attend. The minister and his wife were often present. As Clarence King came in for lunch, he went to wash his hands and returned to walk around the table

for his selections. Hester was pouring coffee when she noticed Clarence had torn a hole in his overalls. She said, "Why Clarence, you've got a hole in your pants. I'm gonna look into that tonite!" There must have been ten that heard her and they burst out laughing. She tried to explain and the entire household enjoyed the moment. Mom would quote her on that incident and had great fun telling Myrtle Forrest and Eve Miller and others.

It was a great era of growth for the church. It was during the hard times and there was a constant need for money. Supplies and things that needed to be purchased required cash. Money was so scarce. The church board would meet several times to discuss a need and invariably they would turn to the Ladies Aid and ask for help.

The Ladies Aid group were very faithful in meeting each month. Their membership was strong in numbers and dedication. They would put these quilts together for \$3.00 which was a very modest sum indeed for all the hours of work required moving and storing the frames that supported the quilts, yet their treasury grew and when a crisis arose at the church, they always had some money to help. Their cash on hand often made the difference whether a project of church repair or fuel bill or what could be met. Their fund was vital in those days. It was not uncommon to find 18 to 26 women on hand for the Aid Day, they called it. It was a major community social get-together for hard working mothers each month and contributed to church growth.

In earlier days when attendance was somewhat smaller, it seemed nearly everyone had a job or responsibility of some sort. There was always a need to step in and help. As cars became more plentiful, that helped, however their winter problems and uncertainties made need for some folks to do two or three jobs.

While I had parts in Christmas and Easter programs and such, as a kid I was a teenager before I recall any regular useful responsibility. The cold weather and drifting roads made the early cars less dependable and thus some folks would miss a Sunday service. It was on those occasions I would attempt to fill in because we were nearby and were always there. It made Mom happy to

see me take on work there. A favorite was being song leader. I knew no music notes but from years of repetition I did know words and tunes to favorite hymns such as Little Brown Church in the Wild Wood, The Old Rugged Cross. Beginning on the cold blustery Sunday morning when the superintendent for Sunday School or the song leader was absent, I'd do that or BOTH many times. Then I would lead the reading from a leaflet we used each week then lead the songs, make announcements, select the ones to fill other jobs and be a self-appointed superintendent. When folks learned I was going to do it anyhow, they had no choice but to put my name on the ballot which resulted in serving these duties for many years. I can recall enough mistakes to fill a book just with errors. One time I announced we would not sing the fourth verse. Seems I felt the words were reflective of a family death not long before. The piano stopped and the congregation stopped and I burst out with the first four words of the fourth verse. You can only imagine how that sounded as I hit the first two words hard acappella and softer on the next two to come to a complete silence. Complete silence? No. Clevey Getts, sitting near the front in his regular seat near the isle, laughed loud and long. I had a heart attack in my throat. Enough of that!

I was superintendent of the Sunday School a number of years before Millie and I were married. After we were married, we lived 3 miles east of the church near old US 27. I had to get up at 3 a.m. to do chores; milking by hand, feeding livestock and all took nearly two hours then clean up and race to Waterloo to pick up the newspapers for the route delivery by 6 a.m. It was a busy morning and collections were always a bit more time consuming but I recall I was usually there in time for service. I had to be home by 9 a.m. to change clothes and make it to the church by 9:30 when the last bell rang. It was a practice then, and is still in effect, for the janitor to ring the church bell at 9 a.m. sending out an invitation thru the community "It's Sunday and you have but 30 minutes to get here!" In the winter, one could hear the bell for miles depending on the moisture in the air and of course the wind. The last bell rang at 9:30 signaling the beginning of Sunday worship.

In May of 1961, I wrote up a proposed bulletin for Sunday School. Other churches had them and I thought we needed one also. I took the proposal to Dorothy Phillips. She thought it to be a good idea so I would search out news during the week, select songs and various other information needed for the morning service and then I would take this format to Dorothy each Saturday morning. She would cut me a stencil during the day and I would pick it up Saturday evening then with the little hand cranked mimeograph, printed 100 bulletins. As the old machine would no longer feed paper from a package, I had to put one sheet in, turn the crank and print one. If it was too dim, I would add ink but if I added too much, it would blot the sheet; then I'd put another in, print it, put another one in and print it and so on. We printed them in our basement and then Millie would help fold them and they would be ready. I feel they added to the quality of the song service and worship service as the participating individual's names appeared in the bulletin giving them notice to be prepared.

Ralph Lockhart can be credited with a great idea that benefitted the Sunday School classes. He suggested the men get together and make folding doors for the basement to separate classes. Prior to this, teachers held classes near each other with no separation.

Eventually, the desire to build a new and larger building and construct it some distance from the road. The old church was built in the horse and wagon days and sat near the roads on the corner. As the roads were both widened, they came so close in front and to the side that it created a hazard. There were several auto accidents on the corner attributed to the lack of vision at the intersection.

With the settlement of Mom and Dad's estate, Millie and I became beneficiary of a sum of money. At that time, we purchased land from Dick Lockhart who had purchased the home place. After paying him for the land acquired, we put the balance in the Sunday School collection for supplies as needed.

Plans went forward to build a new building rather than enlarge the old building. It was to be the best idea in the long run. The loan office in Auburn would loan the money, but their policy was no loans were made to a church for various reasons. The church

board decided upon three people to borrow a stated amount of money. On the date of the signing, Ralph Lockhart, John Brandon and I went to Auburn and signed the note with agreement to repay twice a year with all principal and interest to be repaid in ten years. As Thanksgiving time approached, we seized upon the idea of a Thanksgiving offering with special effort now to give. Here to for, it was for a building fund. Now it was to retire a loan with a set amount and a firm date. As the time drew close, I became worried feeling it was necessary for the first collection to be high enough to assure support. I purchased a large quantity of envelopes and printed up a great number of sheets of information detailing costs and interest. I made a point of each family getting one but I went beyond that and took one to most of the neighborhood households. I felt they benefitted by the new church too. It wasn't hard to do as I knew them and told them of the need and asked their help. After the collection, we had an evening meeting and there, Wilma Wilhelm disclosed to us the amount of this effort in excess of some \$4,000.00. I, along with others, were greatly surprised.

Wilma now had a problem. On Sunday night she had all that money! Later she told us that she went home and put it in the deep freeze and locked it up. Now that's what's called "cold cash"!

Many stories could be told of the great cooperation that surfaced to aid in the building project. I recall measuring the pews and determining how many people could be seated. Dorothy Phillips and I selected the windows, traveled to area churches to examine light fixtures and deciding the best for us. Ours were patterned after a church in Defiance, Ohio. They have served well.

The date came for occupancy. It was decided that the third week of August, 1961 we would begin the morning service in the old building and mid way we would cease the song service and walk over to enter the new building together for a prayer service and then continue on with the morning worship.

Al Holzbauer was the minister at that time. His sermons were invigorating and stimulating and we saw much growth during this time.

likely appreciated by those born of an earlier era.

From time to time, one must look back at the past to sense the direction we are traveling. It can be a revealing experience in itself.

Many things are much improved now and many of the hardships have been overcome.

One of the activities that I personally missed was the old-fashioned ice cream socials. Young and old would gather to make home-made, hand cranked ice cream. The ladies would bring the milk and eggs and do the mixing and prepare the various flavors. The men were on hand with all sizes of freezers. Large blocks of ice, from Tompson's Ice House, were broken into smaller pieces by placing the blocks in burlap bags and then pounded to a fine snow-like condition and then mixed with salt to provide a cold sufficient to freeze the cream mixture. There may be ten or more freezers working at a time as most of them were five quart capacity. There was also an order placed for factory ice cream too. These came in five gallon containers and enclosed in thick insulated wraps. The social was often held in our little basement in the old building. People came from all over. Many came from Auburn and the Auburn folk would plan to meet and visit at the country church. They came and went but visiting was mostly outdoors as the basement area was so crowded. It was a real social event that we enjoyed and received many compliments and encouragement to continue. A few times we held it outside but that was less successful.

When we owned our school bus chassis and the township owned the body, I used it for the church kids recreation. It provided trips for many kids that had never been to visit or see even the larger cities. We made quite a number of trips to Toledo, Ohio. We would load the bus at the church and leave at 6 a.m. on Sunday morning. June Davis would keep a list of everyone going. The bus would be loaded; every seat taken and we would head out going east. We could usually make it to the Boulevard Church of Christ by 9:30 their time. It took us two and a half hours to make the trip. Tommy Overton was the minister there and had a welcoming committee waiting and quickly served us orange juice and refreshments before we went into the church.

Those people always looked for use and June had special numbers prepared. The church people had a great Sunday dinner for us. Tommy was a great guy who found time to talk to each one before we left. Around 2 p.m. we would get to the zoo and to some it was the greatest thing. On the way home, the bus would be just buzzing with stories and recollections. Within an hour, all was quiet. People were dead-tired, kids were sleeping and everyone was glad to get home but when you said it was time to go again, well, you had a bus full with repeat members along with some firsttimers.

I recall one summer we made several trips to Chicago going three Sundays in July. One time as we were preparing to go, there were several folks who said they might drive along and follow us. I asked Glenn Forrest if he would drive my car, however, and follow me in case of a bus problem or sickness or any other need that might arise. He had planned to go so he drove our car behind the bus. I went up road 6 to highway 41 and took the outer drive along the lake Michigan for the kids to see more. To many it was their first time and some were high school age. When we got to the museum, they wouldn't let me park the bus in the lot so after unloading, I had to take it several blocks away. I talked to Glenn and told him where we were going. We started out fine but in the busy traffic, Glenn kept dropping back from the bus and when I turned off, he went on past the corner. I had been stepping on it a bit briskly to tease him because I knew he had his hands full in the traffic trying to keep up. He was a bit timid in the melee and it was fun. I think I waited a half hour or more before he got back and the nicest thing he saw that day was the big yellow Smithfield Township bus. I said, "For gosh sakes, where have you been?" "I don't know, sightseeing I guess." I said, "I believe I got Millie to drive. I thought you had gone home." He would always cook me at every chance. I didn't get very many opportunities and had to make the most of one when it came!

Harold Smith had taken his truck around midnite to Rochester, Indiana. The company assured us the furniture, (pulpit, the communion table and chairs) would be ready. Harold brought them back before daylite. I had gone over to the church early but Harold had come and gone and everything was in place. It was a great contribution to that day.

Many stories could be written about the construction of the new and existing building. There may be little need here as there are so many more eligible than I to do that. At that time I was more deeply committed to the work at the garage as Mr. Lepley had passed away and the family seemed willing to keep me up front in the dealership. The school policy had changed and we no longer needed bus driver bids. The buses were purchased and only the drivers were hired. I was still farming Vern's place and it seemed I had found little time except week ends to be at church. There were those faithful who worked there daily. I shall mention no names for once started, there would be no place to stop.

The church and the community had perhaps never seen such unity and dedication. Once the new building was completed, the cry arose, "What to do with the old building?" After the board discussed it, the decision was made to give the building to Hugh Myers for salvage and cleaning up. The building was now in the way. It took up much needed parking area and was a growing threat to the potential for a serious accident to happen. When Hugh was unable to get to it, one Sunday morning during announcement time, I suggested we begin immediately to dismantle it using volunteers and doing it in a respectful and organized way maintaining respect for it and for all the many hands who had built it. We would not use the wrecking ball or bulldozer. Folks liked the idea and I had a feeling of great pride when I saw our membership turn out in numbers as they did. The attitude, the outpouring of help was astonishing and revealing of the undercurrent of good will. The new construction was no miracle. It was a thing whose time had arrived. The need was there, but the old church that had served so well for over a century, half of the life of our country, had sheltered prayer services, song services, weddings, funerals, fellowships and

evangelistic meetings deserved to be dismantled with respect and it received it. Men with tools removed the walls board by board and piled the lumber, removed the windows without one cracked glass, the bell was lifted down with care and pride, piece by piece. All parts that could be salvaged were hauled to Max Peters barn (the old Herman Meloy place) and stored for resale or to be used again. It was orderly and truly a happy experience. I was so glad when three weeks later, it was gone. All the leftovers had been deposited in the basement area. Wilhelm's gravel company had then filled in the depression and cars were parking over the basement area. There was no more threat at the corner. The one thing I feared never came about. There was no personal injury reported or any that I heard of. God must have approved that action. It was truly a miracle.

While Mr. Lang, of Auburn, built the church house, there was so much retained for volunteer workers in effort to hold down the cost. There was much painting to be done. Dale Rakestraw headed up a group to finish the basement floor with an epoxy paint requiring several applications resulting in a hard surface that was easy to maintain. Ladies groups outfitted the restrooms and nursery area. The nursery became an important room that accomodated the many young families of the church. The men assumed work outdoors to prepare parking and drainage benefits.

There became a need to enlarge the parsonage and the men and boys of Cedar Lake went to work there also and thus avoided a large debt. Our minister and his wife, Al and Clydella Holzbauer, had eight children and the parsonage just wasn't large enough to provide the necessary space for a family of that size.

As the attendance grew, the need developed to enlarge the church sanctuary area. Everett Freed and his construction company did a good job and provided an added on area that matched the previous construction.

I think the older and long term members of the church felt greater appreciation for the facilities. I heard many references of comparisons to the early days; the heating, lighting, restroom, baptistry, speaker system, all of which may have been more

complete accuracy. We saw so much and were so overwhelmed at it all.

I stopped at a farm homestead. Some buildings were gone, some machinery remained, but no house or barn was standing. Evidence was there indicating that something had existed there at one time. In the front yard, nice and green, was an unusual sight. A lady was walking around just looking and picking up debris. I found difficulty in talking. The front step, a huge stone and cement step, and a big chimney stood like grave markers to tell the story. That was all that remained above ground of her house, yet the strangest sight of all was there in the front yard a short way from her front step. What was it? Guess. -- It was an egg tree; a small tree, about four feet high, hanging with decorated egg shells. The big trees were gone, the house was gone, the out buildings were strewn for a thousand feet. I just figured she'd hung the decorated eggs on the tree after the storm but she told me that she had just finished hanging them before the storm and that only one egg was missing. I said, "I can't believe it!" "I know," she said, "I've counted them and all but one is still hanging there." Fragile little strings and bows and empty colored egg shells stood no more than 10 feet from the concrete step, the only thing left on that lawn! A big hickory tree about 2 feet across was gone. The remains were about 4 or 5 feet high and the stump looked like a porcupine of long white splinters. The tree may have been twisted off, I don't know, but I can't see how it could have been pulled into but the obvious big tree was alive and well before it was hit. I tried to pull off some small white slivers that stuck up and couldn't pull even one off, so tough it was.

The beautiful lake at North Shore Mennonite Church, where we ate lunch three days before, was full of trash and roofing. The big church was in shambles and the houses near the lake had disappeared! The one story houses built on cement with no basements were wiped away clean, gone. The lake held evidence of some but much debris was taken so far high and wide it couldn't be identified.

The roads were opened by gangs of men with trucks and chain saws so traffic, rescue, livestock and damage could be assessed. It was so overwhelming; death and

destruction were everywhere. I can't recall the number of lives lost but it was minimal as compared to the utter devastation.

Sunday being Easter, it was our practice at church to receive an offering to apply on the loan we had for the new building. In as much as we were well ahead of the payment schedule, we voted to pay the interest and donate the balance of the offering to the Shore Mennonite Fund. Being Superintendent at that time, I was delegated to go as a representative along with Wayne Wilhelm, Treasurer, and John King, board representative. We three attended a dinner meeting where influential neighborhood men gathered to accept donations.

At this evening meal were men from all walks of life and had suffered varying degrees of loss from this event.

Of all the stories told that day, one will stay with me like it happened yesterday. The minister at Shore Mennonite told his experiences that night. Now the storm didn't happen at night, it was in the afternoon, but those in the direct path of that tornado declared it was nite that afternoon. Men there had witnessed darkness and clouds before in storms but none like this. As the storm approached from the southwest, he watched very intently from a rear door. At the time, he became alarmed at what he saw and directed the family to the basement. They grouped together near a west wall but he ran back upstairs to determine the direction. Night lights and security lights came on all over the area and lit up like normal. There were about 12 houses across the road and near the lake. It became increasingly hard to judge the storm now, but he felt they were in the direct path. His alarm grew as wind picked up in intensity and then all the lights went out and the community was plunged into darkness. He slammed the door shut and ran down to join the family for the ordeal. He remembers them huddled together and praying for their survival. He said when it hit their house, he thought the basement shook. It probably was the main floor as the ceiling was vibrating trying to resist the tremendous vacuum that existed above ground. This rustle of the floor above lasted but a little bit then all was still and dark. It was an erie feeling but they felt the worst was past. He decided to emerge and

On Good Friday, 1965, Millie packed a light lunch and we left home about 11 a.m. to go out and look at new or used travel trailers as we had decided on this form of recreation at this time.

We pulled in along the side of the Shore Mennonite Church on U.S. 20, ate lunch in the shade and proceeded westward. We spent a couple of hours in and around the Elkart area as this was the very heart of trailer manufacturing country. There were many strange names entering the market. We looked at many different ones but decided to give up hunting new ones and concentrate on finding a good used one. Well, we couldn't find a used one to our liking so we decided to consider a good name brand as opposed to ones that had been home built in backyards or garages.

By late afternoon we were exhausted. We had a fun day but enough was just that. Millie got rid of all the brochures except two that we liked real well. We decided to leave to the south and return on U.S. 6 rather than using the same route we'd driven earlier that day. As we left Elkart, we discussed the difference in the two motor homes we favored and I asked Millie if she would like me to turn around and go back a few miles where she could examine the one again. "Oh no," she said. "I'll study these pictures and we'll just go on home. I've seen enough." We continued on south and learned her decision to continue on was the best decision we made that day. As we drove south, we engaged in constant conversation about the pros and cons of what we had seen such as the differences in the bath and kitchen and sleeping facilities.

We noticed the heavy black clouds to the west of us and made casual mention of them but going south, it mattered little. We didn't care. We had a brand new car and seemed invincible and what of rain -- what can it do anyhow.

Millie kept reading and explaining the rooms and cabinets, storage etc. I noticed we were meeting an unusual number of police cars. State Police were heading north, running fast. I spoke of it and said, "Here comes another police car. Must be something happened behind us. That's the third one we've met." Before we reached road 6 we met a couple more.

We turned east on U.S. 6 and decided to hurry a little more as the sky was becoming more dark and threatening. We thought we should hurry along now and get home ahead of the storm and be sure the house was secured. After all, it was so nice when we left we may have left some windows open. I could see black clouds in my rear view mirror but wasn't greatly concerned as we were enthusiastic over the prospects of a travel trailer and what it could do for us. I had never thought of turning on the radio until we got in the house and did so immediately and heard the description of the most vicious storm ever recorded at Elkart that went through shortly after we left town. It was most fortunate that we had been so wrapped up in our handfull of brochures. Had we returned to the trailer we discussed, we would have been in the path of the storm. It formed suddenly and hit so viciously with little warning causing unbelievable damage. The weather people said winds may have reached 600 mph. All night long there were broadcast reports of damage to areas we had visited that day. Dunlap was laid to devastation; trees, homes and factories. Once the storm formed the tornado, it traveled northeast, somewhat different than recorded before as it did not raise and lower but remained on the ground cutting a wide path of destruction unlike most that cut a rather narrow line of great force also as it traveled it spawned numerous tornados that cut north and south from the main storm. The newspapers and radio gave graphic accounts of utter destruction the following day and for weeks to come.

At the garage, people who lived north of us came in telling stories of wind damage that were hard to believe. More and more drove up around there to see the evidence and returned saying, "You must see it to believe it!" We drove up two or three times to the areas we were familiar with and couldn't recognize where we were. We took friends along a couple evenings and toured around and talked to folks. On Sunday, I recall we drove up in the afternoon. As of this writing, it has now been 24 years last Easter and my individual recollections might not be quite accurate but the library will have records of newspaper reports if anyone is interested in

see what happened. I think he emerged from an outside cellar way, I'm not sure but the following I do recall. He stepped out into total blackness with moderate wind and heavy, heavy rain pouring as though one were standing under a waterfall. He stepped out and heard cries for help with more and more cries to the left and right. He stood still for a moment not knowing which way to turn first. The rain and wind were beating on his face. The sky was beginning to lighten a bit and he could see in the directions of the cries. They came from his neighbors across Rt. 20. He knew he must go over and help them. As he got his legs to respond, he realized he was soaked to the skin and the thought occurred to him that he should get his raincoat. He knew where it was; right inside of the front door. He turned around to enter the door and grab the coat but as he turned to face his house, he was stunned. There was no house! His house was gone. He had not noticed that as the sky was rolling light and dark, the wind and heavy rain and most of all the crying of the injured had so engulfed his mind, he now stood with all this pressure and his house, his home, was not there. He just stood there like a statue. He said, "I never felt so lonely or so helpless and lost in my life. I simply can't express in words the emptiness I felt when I realized my house was gone." He regained his conscious feeling and began to help in rescue. The clouds blew northeast and the light returned. Many were trapped under debris and it was imperative that help begin right now. This was not the time to pause and try to figure out what happened. To hear him relate his experience that night was gripping.

I was seated by an older Amish man. He was pleasant and I enjoyed talking to him that evening. We talked of the sin in owning luxuries and the result of such. I recall asking him to define a luxury as they would deny themselves. Well, I couldn't understand the thinking. I said, "It seems that your cookstove is a luxury over the use of a fireplace. You have a warming oven, baking compartment, hot water reservoir and all that seems very convenient. Where is the line drawn? Shoes and socks would be as much a luxury to the barefoot man as using an electric light in the chicken coop rather than a lantern." He invited me to come up some evening and he would explain it all. He smiled

and told me we could spend an evening at it. I thought I would but I never got to it. I wanted to learn why the car or telephone is a sin to own, yet when one pays to use someone else's for a minute or two, it is OK. You own it for that time, it seems to me. He was sharp and I think he could have given me insight in their strange differences of thinking. I liked him and his twinkle. I thought of that conversation often and yet can't recall his name now. He was an old man and lived just east of Shipshewana.

I remember visiting the remnants of a village in Vermont long ago. It was built and occupied by a very religious group who are now extinct. They built all their houses near together like the colonies in Iowa, but one thing was different. They made very low door ways. All the doors were extremely low requiring one to bow their head before entering any room. The house entrances were low, kitchen to sitting room; to enter or leave a room, you first bowed your head. I wonder where these sects come upon their strange beliefs. I'm sure they aren't scriptural. The teachings of man can become distorted when strayed from the truths of the Bible. These strange practices aren't the things that make man holy.

While I served many years as superintendent of the Cedar Lake Church of Christ, it began and continued for such a long time because no one wanted to do it so "he does it all right so"...that's the way it was. One time in the winter, the songleader failed to get there and as I've mentioned before, I was about fifteen years old and went up and lead the songs. After that I did so quite often and was chosen to do so. I did the superintendent duties when he didn't show up and was elected to that position but in those days when the roads were snow drifted there were many absences as the cars didn't have the wheels or the power for snow driving, I often had double duties of song leader and superintendent.

Our attendance then was 37-44 or such and a bit more during the summer months. There were hard times and on occasion for a time we had no minister but mostly the church board managed to have a preaching service. From 1930 thru 1960 we saw many different preachers in charge of services and attendance gradually grew rather slowly but grew nevertheless.

Around 1953 or '54, a rather young man became our preacher. His name was David Slagel. He had a wife, Genevieve and some children. He was a good man and hard worker, very sincere and quite well liked. All went well and I learned to like him and we worked together.

One Sunday in his sermon, he stated that people who believed other than as we, were lost and on the road to destruction. It was a shock and would have passed but Dave expanded that theory and reasons frequently in sermons and folks became hurt, angry, found fault and complained to the church board.

The church board listened to all complaints but failed to talk to Dave in a serious way. Things got worse. One day when he declared those who attended other church congregations unlike many were going to Hell. I saw Mayme Allomong begin to cry. She got up and walked out, 60 years old and the first time she ever had done such a thing. I talked to her. It seems her mother was of somewhat a different faith; Methodist or Baptist and she was hurt.

As result of that, I became quite vocal about this situation and declared the

church board was reading the paper while the barn was burning down. They are the ones that should confront Dave, not me; I was Sunday School Superintendent. We had the very cream of our church on the board but they didn't want to hurt anyone or rock the boat. People came to see me and see if I couldn't do something. I talked too much and referred them to go and see the board and if the board asked me to something, I didn't know what, I would, but I wouldn't let the church come apart like this.

One Saturday p.m. I finished with a customer, came out of my office and to my surprise there was Chester Vian, board chairman, waiting to see me. I knew I was in for it now, but had said nothing but the truth, so as quickly as I could, I called Chet in the office. He said, "We don't know what to do. I don't know what to do. Can you do something? What will you do?"

I was concerned. I said, "I don't know, but by gosh I'll do something right away." He said, "I wish you would, go ahead."

As soon as I got home I began work on a survey of ten questions, printed them on a sheet of paper and left room at the bottom for personal comments and suggestions as to how we could correct problems and improve our church services. I encouraged each member to answer all ten and add a comment if they desired. I asked that they not sign their name. I didn't need to know who, we just needed their input for those of us in positions of leadership.

The survey came back immediately and it was revealing and quite frank. A number of people signed their paper and almost all wrote lines of suggestions. Some included money for me to use for postage, gas or whatever were costs of this endeavor. Millie and I read each one. We let no members see them, however there were those who were curious and asked. The board asked and I gave them the entire boxful. They returned them to me and the preacher asked to see them. I told him, "They are quite frank, Dave, in revealing their thoughts of your preaching down on other congregations." Dave read them and announced his resignation the same week. Our church had always held high regard for those who attended other churches including Catholics and could not accept this

sudden denouncement of such. We liked to feed family or friends of another church and felt we were on a different road to the same place and even attended neighborhood funerals looking to a great reunion one day.

The Church at Christmas Time

This past week, a lady stopped me in a store here in Auburn to say she recognized me (I'd never seen her before) in the store because she went Christmas caroling several seasons with our group. She had joined us by invitation of a friend at school who attended our church. She declared it was a great outing for her because of the hard times; war times, fuel shortages, kids in those days went little and in some homes the went nowhere at all!

Sometime it would be bitter cold with almost no heat in the bus. The 1935 Ford had a little bench heater in the front and that was all. Kids crowded in really packed tight - four to a seat, and stomped their feet to keep warm. Glass would freeze so thick with frost that we couldn't see out. Most of the time we would drive as near the house as we could and all jump up and then June Davis led songs. How those kids would sing the Christmas carols. Then they would go into the house when invited and get cookies, candy or whatever. Sometimes when we could, I'd drive across the lawn thru the snow to along side of the front porch. We'd remain in the bus and drop the windows on one side and sing from the bus.

It was sheer fun and all those trips and houses, no one got hurt. I think I broke a glass once at Brown Albright's backing out to the road. A limb rubbed too hard. That's all, I don't recall ever getting stuck or any such trouble.

The old bridge at Monroe Bailey's (it was a gravel road in those days) had loose planks. I knew they would make a noise when we would cross. Bob Hamman was the driver of a car and we decided to scare the kids a bit. Stupid, yes, but we decided to argue about crossing that old bridge. I'd say Yes and Bob would say no. I'd cross it anyhow.

As we approached, we discussed the weakness of the old timbers. Bob said, "No, don't cross. It will not hold the busload. It even shakes with a car. I decided it would

hold ours and I'd take it each about 25 mph and all that. Well, we had their attention. When the wheels hit the first planks, I shut off all lights. Bob and I both yelled at the top of our lungs. The dark busload screamed bloody murder then I turned on the dome lites and hood lites and the kids were hugging one another. We always had a bus full when we left the church. People were generous with hot drinks and goodies and kids were ready the next year.

Church Tragedy

Our church suffered one of its greatest tragedies in 1956. James Johnson was our minister and was well liked. His wife, Dorothy, was a good worker who liked everyone and was a real team mate to his work. They had three children, Dennis, David and Judy. They had become a part of Cedar Lake church and community.

I had ordered in three six cylinder Chevrolet tudor sedans with standard transmissions, one blue and white, one green and white and a gray one. Jim bought the first one and with the choice, took the blue and white one.

The week of Mother's Day, everyone was so busy. We had cars to deliver and I was knee deep in a Chevrolet contest as always at this time of year. I was in and out of the office all week long. Bob Hamman, was home several days having delivered a hookup of New IHC trucks out west someplace and had none ready for him immediately. He came to the garage often, having purchased several cars from us, he and I would talk cars, also he and I teamed up to sponsor the youth of our church. Bob thought up ideas we could do and I had the school bus to use for transportation. We were always doing this or that together. I was always glad to see him.

I think Bob had spare time that week between trips and came in at least two or three times. He would sit, smoke a cigar now and then. He had a very hearty laugh. We all enjoyed Bob. He bought the nice things for his car. It was always clean and he was a good salesman for our dealership.

Thursday, he told me Glenn and Marge were all coming down to their house on Friday nite to make things for Mother's Day handouts. Well, he said he asked the preacher

and their family also but wasn't sure they would make it. Thursday nite, Millie and I went to Glenn and Margie's to play cards. This was always good fun. Glenn and Millie would play Marge and me and we had great times talking, visiting, munching on whatever time after time and it was something we learned to look forward to.

This time, we had some special things to discuss. The previous year we had taken Glenn and Marge with us for a two week trip into Colorado. That trip was a joy every day. We visited many places that we had enjoyed before but it was all new to them. It was such a great trip; thru the prison at Canyon City, Garden of the Gods, Cripple Creek, Leadville. We had wondered around and had a good time, now we were talking of doing it again.

Glenn had said he would like to go out to Demming, New Mexico and visit his brother, Clark. Clark had been home after his factory, Bomar, had transferred to New Mexico but that was some time ago. I had looked up roads and things out that way to see Carlsbad Caverns and such. I had gathered some information and Millie had some so we could discuss it now. We did just that. Played some cards then Glenn said he wanted to show me something at the barn. This will always be a puzzle to me but we walked out to the barn and to the milking area. He said, "Here is a funny thing. This motor will not start when I turn on the switch. It runs the compressor to milk with. It's the milking machine. See, now, if I turn on the switch, nothing happens, but see when I give it a pull on the belt, it starts and runs good all the way." He was milking a goodly number of cows. I knew nothing about it but I saw how he started it. We returned to the house and played a hand or two more before going home. They would be up the next nite at Hammans and we didn't want to wear out our welcome either. We had decided to go to see Clark.

Friday morning, Bob came in to tell me he had to take a load of piggyback trucks to Canada someplace and wouldn't be home for the "party/workshop" he had planned for that nite. He tried to put off departure to Saturday morning but the company wouldn't do that. The trip was long and he was to roll out by 2 p.m. that day. He ran back down to Forrests and the preachers, too, and insisted

they had all the stuff ready. "Dode" had refreshments and wanted them to come even in his absence. He did his best, he said, and insisted they go ahead with the plans. When they reluctantly agreed, he came back up to Ashley to tell me the party was on again. They were coming down. I told him I was glad and told of our get-together the nite before. He always liked a joke and I related one that had happened the nite before. The kids were Forrest kids and you had to be on your guard, which I wasn't. JoAnn came where we were and asked me to play a game with her. Glenn said, "What have you got now?" No answer. We got up and went into their other room. There on the west wall was a large donkey drawn on a cloth background. She said I would be pinning the tail on that animal. She covered my eyes tightly and turned me around, first one way, then the other. I lost all direction. When she stopped, she said, "Take three short steps and pin this tail on him." I stepped slowly and uncertainly, took three steps and reached out to pin as she directed. I ran my finger into something soft. I think she had a container of butter or lard and I rammed clear in to the knuckles. "Uh-o," I said, "I think I'm a little low." Well Bob and I laughed and had a good joke. I said, "You'll miss a good time tonite." Away he went. He beat it to Ft. Wayne, picked up his load and headed north to make his first drop off Monday morning then continue on for at least two more days and a trip home besides afterward. He had a weeks work laid out before him now.

Chores were done a bit early that nite for very obvious reasons, so supper could be over and get ready to go down to Bob and Doreatha's.

Now Jerry and Vince were good close friends and Vince stayed at Jerry's often. He had great respect for Glenn and Marge. Jerry didn't care about going along to Auburn. He was 16 now and he and Vince came over to our house. We were always glad to see them and they would come and go whenever over a period of four years, I think, several anyhow. They told us they were taking Barbara and the three were going to Connie Brand's. Jerry had gone with Connie before and they would party there this evening. One of the things we appreciated about those kids was they were so good to tell us where they were

quite unpredictable. The sky was much like the threat that existed in 1965 before the palm Sunday disaster. It would rain hard and blow then stop with such suddenness. I'd turn the wipers off as not a drop would be in the air but water lay everywhere. It was dark and I found it hard to breath. As the author wrote, "It is these times that try men's souls." It did. Your body could do what was needed. You have all the energy of a machine, no problem or tiredness evident on anyone, yet the heart and souls were torn. The hospital was down to low staff for a quiet nite when the accident happened and all the nurses on hand were needed by just one or two if life could be saved and here they had ten thrust upon their meager facility.

I got to Waterloo and drove up to the big white house west of John Sherburn's gas station. I let the lights show on the house to help wake up the household and allow anyone inside to see I was alone and making no effort to conceal my invasion. I was wet anyhow, so I just got out and went directly to the door. Maude Shoemaker answered. Now, I knew Maude Shoemaker from somewhere, I don't know. I think I met her at the hospital when she attended a friend a year or so before. What I didn't know was that she was an angel. I had heard or read one time there are angels on this earth and always has been, but we don't recognize them. We are not supposed to, but I did. She was one and I knew it. I quickly recounted the desperate need, that was all. She turned away to dress and shortly after, we were on our way to Auburn. I have often since marveled at the calmness on her part. She came to the door almost immediately. It was by now nearing midnite, awakened from sound sleep, yet alert and dressed in, I'll say three minutes, no more. It seems she walked into her bedroom, turned around and came out in her uniform saying, "I'm ready."

On the hurried trip to Auburn, I recounted the four already dead and the two who needed constant care and were not expected to live. As we hurried into the hospital she squeezed my hand and I had a feeling she was praying. She said no words, to me at least. I directed her to Dorothy Johnson's room. By now she looked so bad as her face we entirely dark and areas were a

blue-black. I could no longer recognize her. I couldn't see parts to identify

I stood back simply helpless. I recalled what the doctor had said when I asked if there wasn't something else we could do; he hesitated, shook his head slowly then said that getting a good full-time nurse might help. That was done now. I just watched and I saw a professional go to work. Mrs. Shoemaker saw things to do. She understood the situation and began to do little things for Dorothy, but I noticed her breathing was still so labored and uncertain. I did not like that, I feared it may not resume one of these delays would stretch into eternity.

I walked out and went to the room where Marjorie was. Millie was there yet as a nurse was wiping up blood and helping wherever, as pillows, sheets, pans; helping with David and Dennis' broken arms and legs. Crying and comforting everywhere. Every room had its crisis. The earlier patients got little attention at all. The magnitude of this, the demands of this moment were mountainous. Everyone needed help and one wanted to be in each place where help was needed. I made the rounds again and looked on each one.

Marge was so still and quiet, now cleaned up some except the matted hair. Still and in the coma she could rest in her world, a world apart, a world inbetween "here and there." She wasn't seeing the hurry, the crying, the hurt, the concern, the death. She didn't hear the aftermath that existed. She was at rest. She would lay in this coma in a most critical condition.

Janice lay so still and so unlike this bundle of life; so active and now so inactive. Her hurts and injuries less serious by physical standards but terrible as she, a little girl, was facing life without her father. He was always there to tease her, to love her, to advise her. She was so close to Glenn and now he was gone. Her sister, her only sister so pretty, so young, her constant companion, her guide in growing up. JoAnn, so nice and full of life was no more. Her injuries were perhaps greatest inside.

I went to the boys' room. I was told they would survive their many broken bones. They had apparently no internal injuries and had lost no great amount of blood, but their father was dead. Small boys facing life, a

going. They went a lot, as well they should, but they were great to us and never caused concern. Barb especially would pin the boys down and tell us before departure. We learned to like that and could just go to bed with no reservations.

It began to cloud up such black, threatening clouds and intermittent rain. We went to bed early upstairs in the old house. I had a phone by my bed as I liked to bed down early and sometimes I'd get a parent call late to tell me their child would not be on the bus in the morning or some such. I could answer without running downstairs and breaking a leg.

We were sound asleep and awoke with a start. The phone was ringing. It was Carl Diehl. He didn't make sense at first. He said he heard a radio newscast of a terrible accident in DeKalb county with multiple deaths. He called someone who said it was a Forrest family. I questioned him 'til I became awake. When I became alert I told him they were going to Auburn tonite to work at Bob Hammans. Millie was wide awake and already sensed the great tragedy we were facing. We dressed hurriedly and drove over to Ralph Lockhart's on the Herman Meloy place.

We drove up out front and another came up behind us. Ralph Lockhart got out and had to be helped as he stumbled toward the house. The rain came in gusts and he could hardly see or move his legs. His walk was much impaired. As I came near him he was saying, "They are all gone. Glenn's gone, JoAnn's gone, the preacher's gone. They're all gone." He just kept repeating this statement. Someone came up to me and asked if I knew where Jerry was. I can't recall now who it was. There were about a dozen folks there now to support Ralph and Hazel. I did not go in the house. Millie remained in the car, I think crying and praying. I said that I knew where Jerry was and I'd go get him.

I told the kids there had been a bad accident and Barb could go with Millie, I'd drive Jerry and Vince home. As we drove along toward home, I told the boys what little I knew from what Ralph had told me. I knew not how it happened.

I can't recall if Barb stayed with Jerry a while, it seems like she did, but I don't know. It has been 33 years now and

while some is as plain as yesterday, some details I have lost.

Millie and I drove to Souders hospital in Auburn and learned the awful, awful truth-even worse than we had imagined.

The head nurse filled us in saying there were nine in the car. The preacher was driving; five members of his family, Glenn, Marge, JoAnn and Janice. The accident was the result of a head-on collision at Husselman's hill on the Auburn-Ashley road: She said a lone man, the driver of the other car, was dead. Mrs. Johnson was not expected to live, with terrible internal injuries; Mrs. Forrest was broken up and remained in a coma, very, very serious. It was too early to say what her injuries were for sure. The children, two boys, had multiple bones broke, legs and arms and does Janice Forrest. It was overwhelming indeed.

Millie went to Marge's room to be with her. I went to Dorothy Johnson's room. I would have not known who she was if they hadn't insisted it was Dorothy. Her face was so disfigured in the terrible impact and black as could be. Her breathing was uncertain, so still, a long breath, then none, then 3 short ones. I got a nurse. They were all busy. I said, "Come in here and listen to her. Isn't there something we can do?" She got the poor doctor. They stood looking at her and shook their heads. "There is nothing more we can do." Her face was turned toward me and blood continued to trickle from her mouth. The bed was a mess. Her eye was an inch and a half lower than the other, cuts and bruises were all over. They said those were ok. It was the internal organs torn loose that had caused the accumulation of blood. "Well," I said, "She is still alive and it seems we could do something more." The doctor looked at me and said, "There is just one thing. If you could get a private nurse for her, with experience, to be here with her, it might help" They left. I went to Millie and said, "I'm going to Waterloo. I know Mrs Shoemaker!"

I drove out of Auburn with full understanding that events of this night would change life in our church, in our community, in our family and neighborhood. How much I could not imagine.

The weather was, as often is in northern Indiana at this time of the year,

lifetime of no father; no father at Christmas, no father on birthdays, no father to play ball or go fishing, no father at graduations or weddings. There would be many internal injuries here.

I came back to Dorothy's room. Mrs. Shoemaker was working still trying. I had to ask, "How is she? What do you think?" A small trickle of blood continued from her mouth as before. I thought the swelling was worse. Mrs. Shoemaker shook her head slowly but said, "She has stopped bleeding inside." "How can you tell? It's running out still." Yes, but look at the color. It is not that fresh." With this statement, I left. Millie and I returned home about 2 a.m. We were rung out. Saddened and bewildered. How did it happen? How did it happen? How could this nite be true? Was it all a dream and we would recall parts tomorrow? No. It was true. We were there. It was all so true. We talked and fell asleep.

We went to the hospital the next morning and wondered what we would find. We talked to David and Dennis. Janice could talk but I didn't see her. Marjorie and Dorothy were both still alive but in most critical condition. Marge remained motionless in a coma and would do so for days. Her body lay so still, battered and broken, yet what of the mind. What would it endure, how much could it take if it survived?

Dorothy looked worse than any survivors. While Mrs. Shoemaker had remained at her bedside, with all experience, patience and tenderness, she could offer little encouragement. The internal bleeding had stopped but there was evidence of massive internal injury to vital organs and she was in no condition to undergo surgery as the loss of blood was so great. No one knew how much was lost at the scene, enroute, in the emergency. Blood clots could become a factor any time. Her breathing was stable now.

I think little need be said of the Sunday morning service. I would say, there was no one in our church, no family left untouched. Nothing could have stunned us more than the minister's family and Glenn and Marge's family. The death of an innocent young man from Ft. Wayne; the death of our preacher, the death of Glenn Forrest. I felt

he was the best friend I had thru school, summer work and all of my early life. He was taken away. The death of JoAnn, the prettiest, most pleasant young girl, so good and with great promise. Her ready smile identified her as a true Forrest and now was no more.

While I had seen some of the hurts at the hospital; small boys with both legs broken and one arm too, I'd seen the face of Dorothy Johnson, the motionless body of Marge, the expression of question that appeared on Janice's face as she wanted to know what happened, how much and who else. All these cuts and bruises were visible hurts, but as I looked around the church attendance that day, I decided there were more hurts inside that did not show, but I knew they were there.

A strange thing. I went to Jerry's early Saturday morning after the accident to help do chores and as I opened the milkhouse door, I recalled the nite before when Glenn had taken me to the barn to show me how to start the milker. I was no help to Jerry. He knew fifty times more about the chores, livestock and equipment than I. He was quick to take advantage and was efficient in the work. He had something else far more valuable than the ability and experience. He had preception of spirit, to think, to cope, to adjust to whatever was ahead. His ability for deep thinking was never more evident than now. I was so far below and outside of the actual with perhaps "well-meant" thoughts: "I know how you feel, your plans and such" that I was of no help. A support that Jerry did enjoy was Vince there at his side. How those two boys would work together rising early in the predawn, do chores, milk all those dairy cows, feed calves, young cattle and clean, bed the stables have breakfast and be at school on time every day. This was a tribute to Glenn and displayed the metal in Glenn's only son, his only one to follow the Forrest name for him. He remains to this day a monument to his father. A worthy and visible remembrance to one who fathered him and remained but a short time. While now Jerry was on his own, we thought, I do know he was *not* on his own and never will be. He received gifts from his dad that he gets credit for making the most of. He did just that.. Received much--gave it his all.

While the two boys began recovery soon, with proper care and casts applied to legs and arms, with all the related apparatus, they could talk and give certain assurances of restoration. Janice, too, began to bounce back but would speak no words. She would look at all who came in but efforts to get her to talk were of no avail. There was great concern for her for a number of days, then one day we heard she had spoken to someone of the family. She had answered a question or two. Slowly she regained communication and there was great relief. Dorothy seemed to improve a little each day, while it was small improvement and not what we had hoped for, she did show signs of her strength and ability to recover and with better than could be expected each day in her understanding. Marjorie remained deep in the coma for days with no sign of recovery. There was great concern here but as the days passed, she did respond and there was some blessing there also because the tremendous trauma at the hospital, the fate of Janice and all the others, the funeral of her daughter and husband were all over and done. She was spared that experience. When she could comprehend, Jerry, her father, (Ralph Lockhart) and others of the family sat down beside her and told her what had happened. It was almost more than she could grasp.

As there became more evidence of recovery by each one that had survived the impact, I began to study how it could have happened. The more I thought of the results, the more I became determined to learn how it all came about.

The fact I kept turning over in my mind, I was thinking of Bob Hamman. I recalled his three trips to Glenn's and inviting them to come to his house, then his call to leave for the trip north to deliver the trucks, his return to Glenn and Margie's to insist they come down to their house in Auburn as they had planned eventhough he would have to leave earlier. I wondered just how Bob could accept all this when he got word of it. Did he hear it? Did the new trucks have a radio for news? How about at the motels up there? How would he cope as he is a sensitive person and loved every one of those two families. I felt he would feel responsible in part for insisting they come down. As the next several days past, I developed real concern

for him. He and I worked together to sponsor the youth of our church. He had no children of his own, but all the church group were his too, in a way. I knew many times when he would give some young person money for clothes or shoes or treat them to a movie or often take them to a restaurant to eat. That was a "treat" itself in those days. The death of JoAnn alone would be bad enough.

I suppose it will never be known just exactly how this accident happened, but by questions I asked here and there and by knowing the individuals so well, I developed my own theory that satisfied me. I began the next morning on Saturday when the papers came forth with great headlines "4 KILLED AS FAMILY FLEES FROM STORM". This was not true and I knew it. I even resented the implication it left to thousands of tri-state readers but it did fire me up and perhaps I could develop some facts before Bob got home, because when he did, I was sure he would come directly to me and I would need a great deal of preparation. I really did feel he would carry a great burden that could still inflict more needless pain and trouble. I felt he would hang on each word and expression and much could be dependent upon what I would say as he would base his conclusions on it. I was right!

Glenn had just taken delivery of a new 1955 Pontiac 4 door car and had fun selecting a color. They finally set upon a light green and black. It was to be different from others we sold. Glenn laughed and teased Marge about it but all in all it was a nice looking car.

The reader must keep in mind the conclusions set forth here are the result of knowing the people involved and their objectives, then guessing at their reactions and the results that set this in motion before it occured.

Glenn enjoyed that car and was proud of it. While he placed less value on a car, to him it was only transportation and not something to wax, rub and care for, he was proud of it and Marge kept it washed and serviced.

I am sure when Bob presented the plan for both families to come down Friday evening to make Mother's Day handouts, Glenn expected to drive, likely both cars, at least Glenn planned to drive their car. He

It was suggested by the newspapers, who, incidentally, make their living by their choice of "coloring up" an article, that excessive speed factored into the crash. I wanted to know the speed and not speculate at such an important element. The speed and why the car had strayed well into the left lane were two questions I wanted answered.

I had Ralph show me where he was when he saw the car pass the drive, then walk toward the barn. We did just that. He was to stop about where he was when he heard the "steel bin" and wagon bang noise. He showed me about where he was but this information was not absolute. He did remember walking directly from the step to the area and I timed him with my watch. I wrote down the seconds of time it took to walk to the driveway and toward the barn 'til he heard the noise. When I had the seconds written down, I carried that in my billfold and each time I went to Auburn I would check my watch as I passed their drive and vary my speed each time until I reached the impact point. I can't remember it all now, but I drove it at 45 mph, 50 mph, 55 mph then 60 mph. This carried me beyond the oil scarred road area every time. I measured in tenths of a mile the distance to back up my conclusions. For instance, if it was .5 of a mile and took 30 seconds, I knew that the speed was 60 mph but it was less than 5 miles and more than 30 seconds travel time. I no longer recall the seconds of travel, less than 30 but I am quite sure, and by cut and try I learned that whenever I passed Ralph's driveway above 60 mph I would be beyond the point of impact. I settled on a speed a little below 60. While the county law remains 50 mph on county roads as it was at that time, Jim was not one to break the law. I would guess his delay at US 6 and slowing for the railroad crossing, that he was running at the 50 mph mark past old road 6 (now Co. Rd 28) Auburn-Ashley intersection, he may just have picked up a little as he headed down the hill and may have gained slightly a bit more but I am quite sure the speed was not great and for more reasons than one. Glenn was in front and would have made a comment about that if it got fast. He was not for that and Jim knew it. The newspapers that indicated a high speed was wrong. I am sure of that. Secondly, at high speed, the two cars would

have bounded father apart after the collision. They were near each other. I am convinced the speed was quite normal for both cars

Once I established the speed was not excessive, I wanted to know why they were southbound in the northbound lane. The only one I could learn from was David, as he was in the front on Glenn's lap. I knew he was as the Ashley couple told me they could see that while facing the car at the road 6 intersection. I spoke to David several times and learned a little. He was the only survivor in the front seat. Why? He told me as they came down the hill, he remembers a white car, he thought the car was in a driveway headed toward the road but not headed toward them. When I asked about the color, the top or any factors he could recall, all he could remember was that he saw a red lite. I said, "One or two?" He said, "Only one." "Did you see a little white lite?" "All I can remember is the back of a car, a white car, standing still in our driving lane directly in front of us and a red lite on the back end." He didn't know which side, but declared only one red lite. When Jim broke over the crest of the hill and there was this car, he was too close, too fast with this car load to stop. The road was getting wet. The windshield was a bit obscured. Glenn became more and more alert to what was happening. Instead of Jim jamming on the brakes, he chose to take advantage of what he thought was the "open" left lane. As the illusion of a car "sitting still" in the road was the result of someone backing out from that Husselman's driveway and perhaps having no back-up lights, the boy on Glenn's lap looking straight at it saw only a red lite. The absence of a back-up lite would indicate an older car or a car that had backed out and was shifted in to drive before the family's car broke over the hill. The single red lite was a brake lite on one side only. At that time, there were many cars with only one tail/brake lite assembly. It very well could have been an older car rather than a '50 to '55 model with only one lite working. That is less likely. I am inclined to think it was an older car with only one person in the car. It came north and with full view of the impending storm of great intensity, wind and scattered large drops and I think the driver made a quick decision to swing into that drive and make a hurried turn around and return to

never would have agreed readily to all getting in one car and surely not in the smaller tudor car driven by the minister. It must have taken considerable pressure for this to happen. With the busy season upon him, time was a prime commodity. There were chores to do, supper to eat and cleaning-up to get ready. There was evidence of the storm in the air and around the farm. He had a lot of livestock to serve. All in all, he and Jerry worked late enough that Jim and Dorothy and the kids came up to Glenn's to get going. At that time, Glenn kept the car in the garage lengthwise to the driveway and when Jim drove up, it blocked the new Pontiac 4 door so the Chevrolet set near the backdoor and presented a more likely transport. Now Glenn and Marge were always doing something for the preacher's family. The kids were good friends being so close by and Dot and Marge were together. Glenn had a liking for everyone and enjoyed Jim. Marge gave generously of clothes and food items and it made for a great experience for children of both families. Jim's salary wasn't all that great and many gifts of clothing, especially passed along, were support for the preacher's fast growing, active kids.

I think Jim was well aware that Glenn's family gave them so much more than he could return as they always came home with something. Now here was something he could do for them and he seized upon this as an opportunity and insisted that he would drive and assured Glenn they could all go in his car. Now Glenn would oppose that right off. Just plain common sense would dictate Glenn to refuse but he wouldn't do that. But the way it happened with the car at the door, ready, with some getting in, Glenn relented and chose not to "rain on their parade." The kids were all for it. They wanted to get going. Glenn just knew this was not good but felt he had little choice.

Dorothy was already in the back seat by the left rear window. She had Dennis on her lap. Instantly, Judy got in beside her mother. Marge found a seat by the right rear window and Janice squeezed in between her mother and Judy. The two girls were in the center and in the safest area of the car. They sat low and away from the steel window frames and handles. Jim was behind the wheel so JoAnn slid in beside him. Glenn,

knowing this was the wrong thing to do, got in on the right front and held David on his lap. Glenn felt he had little choice, but because of his reluctance, he became even more alert and his senses being heightened would perhaps save a life within 15 minutes of the moment. It appeared to me it did just that.

While the two small boys were broken up badly and with bruises and cuts, they recovered more rapidly. I could talk to them in just a day or two. They said that as the car proceeded southward, their mother, Dorothy, said, "Glenn, David could sit back with us." Glenn said, "You let David alone where he's at." Now the car had to stop at the route 6 intersection. There was traffic first one way then the other. An Ashley couple were north bound on the opposite side facing them. They noted there were four in front and that Glenn was holding a child on his lap and I think it was David. Jim recognized his greater load and responsibility and crossed US 6 only when it was safe to do so taking no chances. The north bound car crossed before he did so I feel he was trying to be safe in his operation.

The two cars met crossing US 6 when traffic cleared and our group proceeded south. As usual, the railroad crossing was rough and abrupt. It is not likely that they crossed very fast. I learned that Ralph Phillips was the last known person to see them so I went out there. Ralph said he had just stepped from the back door on his way to the barn when he saw the preacher's car pass their driveway south bound. He did not know who was in the car but the blue and white Chevy tudor was well known in our church community. As he glanced at the car, he turned and continued walking toward the barn to do chores. I asked him if he didn't hear some noise soon after this. He did recall a noise but he thought maybe one of the boys or some help had backed a wagon into a steel bin or crib, that's all. They had not. That metal sound he heard was the terrific impact of two cars coming together head on. He was concerned about the weather and went on with his duties. The noise was not then associated with the car that had passed. I became most interested in how it happened and especially the speed of the car at the time of impact. I spent a little time on that.

the south immediately. There was no one in sight in front as Jim was yet a little north over the crest. I am inclined to believe that the driver of the white car that David described did however know there was a car behind him, perhaps some little distance, but may have followed a ways and just may have been overtaking him. At any rate, I believe the "stalled" white car was turning around in Husselman's driveway and set up a series of events for the next 10 seconds or so.

Jim turned the car sharply to the left as it entered the northbound lane appearing to Jim that all was well and there was plenty of room to pass the now slow moving white car. For Glenn right now, it was much different. Glenn had seen the white car in their path and he had seen some other things. One, he had caught a glimpse of an oncoming car in the northbound lane before it dropped behind the second hill. He knew there was an accident coming in the next moments. Glenn was very observant at work or play; he missed nothing. I think he knew there was a car hidden in the second low area and would make itself appear. Next, I believe at that moment he sensed a call of alarm and sensing the likelihood of a head-on collision, he did one more thing. *He pushed the boy down to the floor with all his might before the cars came together.* I know the boy was on his lap, I know he was there yet as they crossed the railroad and I'm sure he wouldn't have let him sit on JoAnn's lap next to the driver. No, he had him secured on his lap until just before impact. He saved his life when he pushed him down. He had to have done the final act of protection because on impact everyone went up and forward at the same time. The dash of that '55 Chevy was steel, molded, stiff and resistant but held the sharp impression of Glenn's chest.

This boy, in my opinion, owes some gratitude to the quick thinking of Glenn Forrest. Had he remained in front of Glenn, no way could he have survived the impact, but he wasn't there. He was below the dash completely as the cars embedded themselves together.

The construction of the car, the lack of seat belts, the combined speed of both cars as they impacted, add up to wondering how anyone would survive.

The on-coming car, a young man from Ft. Wayne perhaps like Jim, unfamiliar with the road was traveling north perhaps to the lake area for the week end. Friday evenings were like that. The interstate was not built for another six years. Many cut off of US 27 at Auburn and traveled the Auburn-Ashley road as a short cut to the lake avoiding heavy, heavy traffic on 27 from Waterloo to Angola. Detroit car haulers and other trucks together with local and Ft. Wayne lake traffic had involved so many cars in fatal accidents each year.

I know nothing of the on-coming car. I am sure he saw the white car because he met it about two seconds before the crash, but what became of the other car?

I believe the white car that was in the driveway had to know of the wreck it caused. I think it got moving and met the northbound car before so was clear of the crash a second or two and safe. The driver of that car had to know. I believe the driver of the white car was alone because had there been any passenger, we would sometime have heard someone drop a word of their involvement but never have I heard a word, yet that driver was well aware of the fact that he or she contributed to the death of four people that nite. I believe Jim had the lights on but I've forgotten about that now.

In the rain and storm that followed almost immediately after the wreck, Bob Forrest came upon the scene and had helped clean up for a while before he learned it was his brother and family. He did not know then they were on the road. I was sound asleep during all this, Jerry was with Barb and Vince over at the Brands.. My first real word was Carl Diehl calling to way he heard of a wreck involving the Forrest family and driving to Ralph Lockhart's and seeing him stumble toward the house in the rain saying, "Glenn's gone, JoAnn's gone, the preacher's gone, they're all gone....."

After the funeral, I knew there was a hurdle yet to climb for me. Bob Hamman would be home any day now and it would be bad. I turned over questions wondering if somehow he had learned of the tragedy. Each day I went to work with a concern for him how and when he would learn of it. One thing I knew, he would be up to see me the first thing before he ate, washed or got gas, he'd

be up. He was! Just like I thought, he walked in. I saw him coming. He dropped into a chair in the office with an expression of disbelief. He had heard of the wreck and funeral but he waited for nothing more to come here. "I am to blame," he breathed. I knew it would be like that. I knew him so well. Words will not describe how we talked and felt as we spent the next hour or so alone. It was a very difficult time trying to get him to relieve himself of any bit of responsibility for the loss that we all had suffered.

TRIP EXPERIENCES AWAY FROM HOME

The day I was sixteen was a great day to remember because of the gift of license to drive a car. Mom had secured that earlier. I'll recall that gift as long as I live.

Another day to recall was the day I was 21 years old. I don't know about a woman, but somehow when a boy turns 21 he has arrived. All doubt has passed now for he is now a man equal to and part of the community, someone now to be reckoned with.

Well, with an attractive girlfriend and looking for a way to show off a bit, strutting my colored feathers to impress her, I decided one way would be to take her on a trip to Chicago to celebrate the only 21st birthday I would ever have.

The day came and by then I still had no car and little money but that didn't stop me. I was driving Dad's '36 Chevy tudor. It was a great car. I had disconnected the radio antenna from the "under the running board" mounting as mud, gravel and clay accumulation had weakened the signals. I installed a four inch high chrome rib-like antenna that extended from the windshield to the back window, all chrome, pretty snazy it was. I removed the dash bulbs from the instrument mountings and painted them red. This gave a soft rose glow to the yellow instrument panel. I waxed the dash all shinny except where Pop would strike matches to lite his pipe.

I picked up Millie the morning of departure and we headed west on route 6. Everything was funny. It was a great time of life, just fun and good times. I can't recall being so wound up as we rolled along the road for a trip and time of our life. I had the radio

on and we were singing and laughing. I guess I forgot that there just could be someone else on the road. We were somewhere west of Ligioner, maybe where highway 15 crosses US 6. There is also a rail crossing at the same intersection. We were traveling nearly 60 mph. I looked up and couldn't believe my eyes. There sat a car full of people directly on the road in front of me, stock still. No way could I stop. I was going way, way, too fast for that. A turn to the right meant disaster with utility poles and more utility poles so I cut the wheel left just enough to clear the standing car and did so with only inches along side then found a standing car facing us in the eastbound lane. We were crossing a busy intersection and had no time to look either way. I got the car back into the right side of the road missing the oncoming car. There was no traffic from the north or south at that moment--we were in the clear and continued our trip west more quietly now and at greatly reduced speed, and believe me, a more mature driver. We both realized the seriousness of the past ten seconds or so. We still speak of it, that is Millie does. I never do unless I am pressed to do so.

We traveled on to Chicago to Alva and Hazel Buss' home. They were the most gracious of hosts and provided us with great accomodations by bunching up the kids here and there. Millie was given Marge's room. It was so pretty and pleasant with new things. The boys had to sleep in the living room as Alva chased them out to provide me their room. We had a great time at Alva's. They seemed so glad to see us, to meet Millie and provided us with their best accomodations. Alva's teasing Bill, George and Marge was so darn sincere and his hearty laugh entertained us. Hazel gave us instructions as to parks and zoos and places to see. We were so busy on the go day and nite. I don't know how many miles, but I had been told Chicago streets run pretty much North and South, East and West with eight blocks to the mile so I couldn't get lost but I could get a bawling out from a big, big, burly policeman.

In 1937, stop lights were put wherever they could; hung in the center, out on the corner on a post or on a high wire. I got into an intersection on a red signal with no car coming either way so went on thru. Well, a whistle sounded. I stopped instantly.

roads, we left. Mrs. Keene waved goodbye and asked us to stop again.

(a note on Hattie Keene: We took the side road to see what an advertisement to "buy some red worms just to hear the mountain talk" was about. We learned Hattie had lost a son in the service and she said "We are fixin to have him fetched back." She also told of the upheaval and flooding of the land. People had been driven from their homes and had to relocate when the dam was built. It was not appreciated by those hillbillies, naturally! It was a memorable side trip I'm glad we decided to explore.)

We continued on toward the Skyline Drive and were delighted with the scenery as we drove along the mountain tops. As this was our first experience in the mountains, we stopped often just to soak in the sights. One time I pulled off at a lookout and as Millie and Minnie took pictures, I noticed a brand new Mercury 4 door up ahead in the pull out. There was a woman and boy outside admiring the view while the man was looking over the car quite intently. I walked up and talked to him. He was a bit concerned about having less than a half of a tank of gas and the probability of a long drive before finding another station. I admired his new car and as we both were headed to the same place, I assured him that I had a full tank and would follow him until we reached a station. He seemed appreciative. He would stop at various lookout areas and we would also. This family was from Ashtabulah, Ohio. Mr. and Mrs. George Mallory and their son Duane were a fine family. We found a station as his gauge was nearing the empty mark. After refueling, we decided to travel together and stay in the same motel. He indicated he wanted me to lead and he would follow awhile. We continued on and as evening approached, we came into the town of Erwin, Tennessee. As we came into town, we approached the only stop lite and we needed information. As we approached the stop lite, I noticed about six or more men sitting on an old bench and a crate or two. One was whittling and the others were just shooting the breeze. I pulled up along side, George behind me, and got out, walked around the front of the car and asked those men if they could tell me if there was a motel in town. The conversation all stopped and the big guy on the end got to his feet. He

sure got my undivided attention when he looked square at me and said, "What are you doing here anyhow?" I was shocked. Was this a joke? I said, "We are just driving across country and thought it was near time to find a motel for the nite." "There's no place for you in this town. You better keep right on a goin'. There's no place here for you!" His voice held a definite tone of authority and after a look at the line of spectators, I was inclined to agree. I said, "How far is it to Johnson City and is there a motel there?" "There's a motel there and it's 16 miles." I walked back to the Mercury and told George that we best go on to Johnson City. George said, "I gathered that. We best go on." When the light turned green, I started thru and George was coming behind. As I came through the lite, I spied a pickup truck ahead of us. The pickup was an older model with a flat bed box about six or seven feet square loaded to the brim with peaches. It was not going fast but we approaching a hill right ahead so I decided not to pass and followed it. I had to remain in second gear because the truck couldn't do better all the way to the top. As we got to the crest, I looked ahead and seeing no oncoming traffic, I reved up a bit in second gear and pulled out to pass. As I did, all heck broke loose. A siren blew and red lights flashed. I pulled over quickly onto the burm area and stopped. A police car was right on my bumper. The officer came up to my side, "Can I see your drivers license?" I showed him. "Can I see your registration for this car?" I gave it to him. He was writting all the information in his pad. My curiosity was growing. I thought of one thing. I had given Mom a slip telling her about where we could be each day and as this was the first time we left the area, I told her the police could locate us if something happened. I couldn't wait any longer. We all sat there like bumps on a log. Finally, I said, "Why did you stop me, Officer?" He answered, "You were going too fast." "Sir", I said, "I wasn't going too fast. I was just following that truck up the hill and was still in second gear." "You were going too fast." "Officer", I said, "We stopped in town at the stop lite and I asked some men if we could find a motel. The men said there was no place in town for us. We were going on to Johnson City to find something. When I pulled out, the

A big policeman came up to my side and he didn't like me the least little bit. "Didn't you see that light?" "No, I didn't." "It turned red and you went on thru. I want to tell you something. You guys from Gary are all alike. I can tell you as far as I can see 'ya. You come over here and you don't give a damn for nothing. I hate your guts, all of 'ya. Now get on outta here!" We did! It was a quiet time for a bit but for all the miles and with no experience driving downtown at nite, it was a madhouse. We enjoyed every minute of it though except the two minutes just reported above.

We ran around a lot before we were married. Pop never restricted me the use of the car as long as I was ready to work at 6 a.m. and I do mean *work*. In those days he was a hard worker and I made every effort to match him all day whether on the crosscut saw in the woods or in the hay mow. He was a strong man, but he was never cross to me. He would speak cross to Mom for whatever reason, but not to me. I would take the car and he'd not complain, so Millie and I did a lot of going. It was a good thing, because after we were married we didn't go often. We hardly had money enough to feed ourselves. We were so hard up and short of money that I had to borrow \$75 to buy an old 1930 Ford coupe. It was nine years old and I tried to keep it going so I could run the paper route on weekends, so no trips were for us then.

We struggled along thru to 1946 and were living on the Albright farm. Millie suffered severe back problems and spent the summer in a wheel chair. Betty Badman worked for us but when she would go home, we had no help and with chores, the bus to run, farm work to do, I was discouraged and had a sale and quit farming. I bought half interest in the welding shop with Millie's dad and later then took it over when he retired.

Well, with all the expense of building the house on Vern's and all, we hadn't taken a trip since we were married and we needed some bit of recreation, believe me.

(God is good and very smart too. He knows our needs and can do anything)

One day, Wally Johnson drove in the welding shop in his old IHC pickup truck and asked me to take a ride with him. It seems the wind had blown a building down and it had fallen on a brand new combine he had stored

there. He hadn't used it yet for the first time and had no insurance. He wanted me to look at it and see if I could repair it and have it ready for the harvest soon to come. I crawled back among the rafters and roof and tried to see. It was a mess in there. I told him I'd do it. He pulled it over to my shop and I went to work on the machine, cutting, heating and straightening. All the time I was at it, I decided to do something special with the money. I could see a bill of \$300 and decided we should take a trip as it had been so long. I thought we would just pretend we didn't do that job and just take the proceeds and spend it. (It's so nice to be young!)

Minnie had helped Millie so much all along with the baby and housekeeping, canning and all the past six or seven years and we asked her to go along. We were going to take a trip and that we did!

We drove south and east to locate the Smokey Mountains. We had a 1941 Pontiac tudor six cylinder car that was dependable and we had time and money. Barb was about six years old on our first trip experience.

It was a great time. Millie and I, Minnie and Barbara were all charged up for a fun trip. We looked forward to seeing some new things. We drove south thru Kentucky and into Tennessee. While I had some expectation of the beautiful scenery, it was much more than we had expected. We

chose a less important blacktop road to cross an area and drove into a rural residence. There was a friendly mother on the porch with six or seven children playing around. They became quite concerned as I drove up the drive and Millie, too, was apprehensive. The lady came out to meet us and proved to be so friendly and told us all about the tobacco crop. Her name was Hattie Keene. There was a large hill behind her house. In the front yard was an open well. She offered us a drink. This was a gesture on her part to give us something as it was all she had. The well was deep. One of the kids got busy on the crank. This broke the ice and they hurried to unwind the rope down into the well. One side of the bucket was weighted so it would tip into the water. When it filled, they wound it back to the top. We each took a drink of good cold mountain spring water. Barbara wasn't thirsty right then. After some little talk of the weather and mountain

While the Smokey mountain trip was our first trip away from home, it didn't cost as much as we had expected and the benefits were much greater than imagined. We decided we would manage a trip every year, somehow, and we did. I don't know how, but it happened.

The pictures, the fun, adventure, but best of all, the new acquaintances in Ohio were of such value. It was a trip we will never forget. There can be only one "first" and it was good.

We both worked hard and long hours in the earlier days at the garage along with busing, farming at nite. Millie worked half days at Ashley and drove Barbara to music contests and school events, 4H sewing plus all the housekeeping duties. Sometimes we just got away to play. Barb heard of something interesting to her in New York City. She was a waitress at the Country Charm restaurant at the edge of Waterloo. We picked her up at 5 p.m., went home and she dressed to go. We headed east and drove straight thru and registered in a motel in downtown New York at 10 a.m. the next morning. We were there a couple of days and returned after sight-seeing in the city and the Statue of Liberty and the Queen Elizabeth ship dock areas. Three weeks later, we read in the paper that the manager, a little guy, of the motel we stayed at was shot and killed in a robbery.

In those days, there was a rather small R.V. campground downtown New Orleans along I-10. We stayed there twice and toured the city. It is a most interesting city. In the cemeteries, all the bodies are buried above ground. The iron railings remain of early settlers.

While we lived our lifetime some distance from ocean and water, we enjoyed the great change of life patterns there and always enjoyed those areas. They are so different from what we enjoy everyday; the Harbor tour of Duluth where we watched them load grain on the big ships with a never ending line of trains and trucks hauling it in; at the ore loading docks near Two Harbors where iron ore is loaded for Gary and Michigan smelters; the detailed trip thru the many Navy and passenger vessels in San Diego and to come along side the huge carrier, The Kitty Hawk.

COLORADO and OTHER TRIP INTERESTS

As we recount our possessions, there is one we will enjoy again and again: the experiences of various trips. We were indeed very, very fortunate in so many ways. The times we traveled were great times. There were no lines of people, no traffic problems, it was inexpensive and rewarding to see the different ways of life and to meet some of the finest folk, then return safe and sound to dig in and work another year.

In those days, I was a more skilled driver and enjoyed driving. We had good cars. Millie became a great guide and manager and Barbara was a seasoned traveler in no time. We ate our breakfasts in the motel room, our lunch on a picnic table and often our evening meal in a little restaurant. Barb was always up and ready for a new day. In early days, we went to Colorado several times in a row. We enjoyed the outdoors there and of course, we would stop at "Wall Drug," didn't everyone? We'd read the Burma Shave signs along the roadside and Barbara had the entire backseat to review her purchases. She enjoyed the Indians. We stopped to see all the Indians. She liked to "trade" with them. She traded green paper her mother gave her for wood, beads or leather items of all colors. She had her picture taken with 'em, danced with 'em and visited with 'em. She enjoyed Indians and they knew it. It was always fun.

We would go in August after the heat of the summer and before school and school bussing began. We were in the mood to enjoy those trips. The mountains of Colorado were so high and much more challenging than the Smokey mountains that we had seen earlier, so we spent time there.

The first time we drove up Pike's Peak, we got to the top, 10,000 feet, Barbara got out and went a little way from the car only to come back crying. She was scared. She tried to bring us a pretty stone and couldn't get her breath. As we got used to the higher altitude, we enjoyed it. It snowed almost every time we were there but the sights were ones to remember; like the morning we arose early and drove up a mountain to view the valley below. There, Millie grilled our bacon and eggs as we

truck was in front of me and I followed him all the way up here. I was in second gear, not fast, and never attempted to pass 'til we got over the hill. There was no speeding, I know that." He said, "You should have waited to pass 'till you got to that sign there." He pointed to a sign beside our car saying Resume Speed. "You were going too fast here." "How fast was I going?" "52 miles per hour," he said. This was the first I knew he meant it. I told him I thought perhaps something had happened back home but I did not think I was speeding. I said, "I crossed the railroad down there at 5 mph like the sign said, then took on the hill and remained in second gear and I wasn't going 52 mph. I know that and I'm going to stick with it." He said, "You have two choices. You can pay me here and be on your way or you can take it to court." I thought for a moment. He said, as he looked back, "Is that Ohio car with you?" "Yes, we met up in the mountains and we are going to stay together tonite someplace." He told his fellow officer in the car to go back and "get him." I said, "If he has broken the law, I'll pay his fine. I was leading and it was my fault." The smaller, younger officer went back to talk to George. "Well," he said, "what do you you want to do?" I said, "How long before I can get into court?" He said, "Tomorrow at 10 a.m." I said, "Exactly how far is it to Johnson City and is there a motel there for sure where we can stay?" "It's just 16 miles and there are two motels there." I thought a second. I said, "Since we only have a week for this sightseeing trip and expected to get home Saturday, I hate to spend a day here in court but you write it up for court and I'll be here at 10 a.m. for sure because I'm going to see how you do this. I wasn't going 52 mph and you guys can't do this. I will see how you work this deal." He wrote it up. I thought he would back off but he didn't, so I did. I asked him how much I would owe if I paid him right then. He said \$5. I paid it. I guess that's when he saw the other car and told his helper to go back and "get him" for I said, I'll pay his too, but the other car was gone by then. He took the \$5 bill, got into his car and turned around, picked up the trainee and went back to town. We drove on to Johnson City and as we pulled into the motel, a real nice man came to meet and greet us. He was a friendly sort and

when I got out of the car, George pulled up along side and we told this fellow our experience. George said he saw the police car pull out between us and follow us all the way up the hill. I never saw him. The motel man was very interested. He said, "How much did you pay?" I told him, "I paid \$5." George said he paid \$5 for stopping and laughed. The motel man said, "I've been here seven years and never heard of a \$5 fine. Let me call my wife. She must hear this too." She came and he asked her how much the tourist pays the policeman at Erwin. She said "\$20, why?" "These men here paid \$5." She indicated that she'd never heard of a \$5 fine either. I asked him what about going to court tomorrow. I would have liked to have seen how they could get away with that. He said that I would have paid a total of \$32 court costs and all. It was a good thing I didn't go to court as the judge and officers work together and what they say is law. They paid for the patrol car, their expenses and all. They make their own way with that method and they just got a new car so we had a lucky break.

The Malloy's were the greatest of people and it proved to be a great experience to meet them. George and Doris were near our age. Their son was Barbara's age and those two kids were so good for each other. They sure had fun running and playing all evening as we got acquainted. George and Doris operated a small diner in their hometown of Ashtabula near Cleveland, Ohio. They asked us to travel with them for the next two days and return to their place. We did just that. They were so glad for company and we were too. The kids hit it off well. We could visit and play cards in the evening and the kids got some needed exercise after an all day travel, so it all went well. They had a nice home and we went down to the diner and met some of George's friends that were anxious for it to reopen. Both George and Doris had such a great sense of humor. We hated to leave. We found ourselves going to their home several times thru the years. George was stricken with Cancer and died. It was a sad time. We've visited with Doris on a few occasions since and hope to see her again this summer. We heard from her at Christmas.

enjoyed the clean crisp air and watched the sun rise across the canyons; or back at Rapid City as we paused at the overlook to watch daylight spread across the city below and see it slowly come to life from stillness to rushing traffic.

From time to time, we rerun the colored slides we have of some incidents of our trips and relive those moments again: We see Barbara lowering the rear window and the begging donkey put his head completely inside the car to reach goodies as she shrank away. We see the great buffalo surround our car when I turned off the trail and slowly drove thru a herd of them contentedly grazing in the grass. We recall the beautiful Air Force Cathedral at Colorado Springs and attending services there. The first time we visited the Garden of the Gods. The first sight of Lake Louise with the huge Glacier guarding it. The trip up the needle in Calgary. Cyprus Gardens with the water show. We have a picture of Barbara riding a horse along the trail into the woods for breakfast when we stayed at a dude ranch in upper Michigan. We speak of her loss of a stuffed animal in Skohegan, Maine when I felt ill and Millie drove from inside Canada to cross to the US, just in case. (I was lying across the back seat. (in 1954) It was nothing serious, we learned.) The sight and sounds of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, at St. Johns where the marching band in all its color paraded by and the girls came back to hold our little poodle dog. The learning experience of the visit to Werghauser Lumber Co. in Portland. Our visit with Nina, Jim and the boys in Tuscon. Merced. Bangor. What great times they were. Cape Canaveral and the launch areas. Seeing President Dwight D. "Ike" Eisenhower in Key West and how fast the highway men changed the street signs that morning from Truman Road to Eisenhower Dr. The crash at midnite when the delapodated old bed broke and fell through the third floor in Seattle and we figured we woke the whole town, at least in that apartment house. How fascinated we were to watch the Indians dipping huge salmon from the Columbia River. Driving the Avenue of the Giants, walking among the Redwood trees over 2,000 years old. The great zoo in San Diego with all the vegetation there. The entrance to the Butchart Gardens and the city tour of Vancouver, pottery by "Inika", their

own creations. The two mile walk in Watkins Glenn park, the rain coats and noise under Niagara Falls. I was the lone volunteer to enjoy the glider flight from Harris Hill in New your which was an experience of its own indeed. Watching Richard Petty practice on Riverside Raceway. The first trip to Mexico at Reynossa in 1951 when the men tried to get me to order baked cabrito (goat). Watching our Barbara and Barbara Bowman run and play on Mackinaw Island on the Grand Hotel lawn. Attending church service in our pajamas, driving in our p j's to an auto drivein theater, eating breakfast and dressing after church with the auto speaker hanging on a window. Seing throngs of Mexicans attending worship services at the famous Catholic church in Mexico City, the Shrine of Guadalupe, walking on their knees a considerable distance as they neared, carrying flowers and wreaths. 3,200 entering every 40 minutes, so dedicated to worship that Easter day, a city of 18 million. Passing beautiful farms of race horses in the Spring near Lexington. Driving thru a National Forest in Southwest Indiana when the dogwood were in bloom. Watching sailboat races in Minnesota. The Cathedral of Notre Dame in Quebec, the Peace River Valley.

A drive around the Finger Lake region of New York is always a quiet, pretty, tranquil experience as we had found it with new stops available along the routes and beautiful lakes of sailboats nearby. The woodworking and furniture shops of older craftsmen. The walk in Watkins Glenn State Park, a most unusual walk along the stream and thru the canyon. It was easier to ride out and walk the two miles back downtown but it's more scenic to walk upstream and look at the falls and beauty that way then catch a ride back. A drive up Harris Hill to visit the Glider capital of the world. Rows of gliders and tow planes, ready to give you a trip to long remember. Noontime glider pilots were eating lunch so you waited your turn. A young kid, home from Air Firce training, said he'd take us. He grabbed a paper cup of Pepsi and a hamburger. He was just a kid, but away we went. We were towed down the runway. The tow plane lifts off, we leave the ground then comes the edge of the cliff. We are 12 feet high then we are 1,012 feet high as we soar out over the 1,000 foot cliff a

thousand feet to the valley below. What a sight! We are pulled to gain another 1,000 feet. We cut loose at 2,000 feet and begin a quiet, with only a little air noise, glide as we view the beautiful valley below. The "kid" pilot would seek air currents and climb as he wished then soar around to show me the sights. It cost \$10 but it was the most breathtaking sightseeing experience and I'll never forget it. He was a kid just like the kid next door!

A trip thru Ithica College, beauty of gardens and such pleasant surroundings left a good feeling of life.

A stop at the new building of Corning Glass now opened after the flood damage. The four hour tour cost \$2 but that was only pennies to see all the wonders in glass. Glass discovered before the time of Christ was on display. Many vessels of the earlier kings and rulers from tombs and collections right thru to modern times. It was a beautiful building and had two cafeteria accommodations. The tour finished at the furnaces and there you could sit and watch the pouring and molding at the hands of real craftsman.

A visit to the Maritimes, New Brunswick, St. Johns, Cabot Trail. A day's drive around the Cabot trail is different. A visit to a modern fish packing plant where the workers were in white. It was so clean and full of white cold meat. There was no smell of fish either. We sat on cliffs and watched men run their lobster traps, pulling up only the ropes of their own color floats and attended a lobster supper in the outskirts of a little fishing village. They were great people there. A tour of St. Johns, the homes, fishing vessels, bag pipe bands marching in colored kilts. The children were so courteous and the people so contented. A personal tour of a ship building company conducted by the President of the company on a Sunday morning. He was so accomodating, never to be forgotten. The reversing falls at St. Johns where the river flows one way at 10 a.m. at 35 mph and flows in reverse at 2 p.m. ever so rapidly. Very interesting Bay of Fundy Park.

LAKE LOUISE

One year in June, we were touring western Canada around and thru its most scenic areas; the 200 miles of the Fraizer River canyon on into Revelstoke with flowers of all colors and descriptions. Each day was different. While we had been on these roads during earlier trips as the result of suggestions of Bob Hardy, who was a world traveler, we were now driving the motorhome, just the two of us recently retired and in no hurry.

The unusual part was the time of year when green was soooo green; small plots of lush alfalfa harvested for health food and flowers of rich color lined the highways and side roads.

We drove into the main entrance at Lake Louise on the morning of June 23, Millie's birthday. Well, the sun was doing its best. The fine manicured lawns of the rich hotel were breathtaking. We gazed from the motorhome at the blue of this glacier fed lake, so clean and clear and the sun lite pointed to the shoreline and its natural beauty. As we prepared to secure the motorhome and spend the day, Millie said, "Well, what will you do for my birthday next year? I can hardly wait! All this and now Lake Louise too!" It was a fun time as we walked among gardens and sat in provided lounge chairs. We just spent the day reflecting and absorbing the times and place. It was unusual. There weren't crowds of people in those days. This was the third trip here but because of the time of year and the feeling of not having to hurry back and Millie was feeling good in those days, it was great to count our blessings.

NOVA SCOTIA

The first trip around New Brunswick and Nova Scotia was another experience we would long remember. A new car and trailer gave us great service. We entered Antigonish and when the light turned green, the car ahead did not go as we expected. He kept waving for pedestrian traffic to continue to cross. This signaled a warm attitude. We hunted a campground nearby and proceeded to enjoy the sights but the people were the greatest joy. They were so accomodating, so helpful. They treated the tourist like kings. A woman in a camera shop

in Canada and had traveled all those miles with us!

ALASKA

I ordered a new Chevy station wagon in July of 1963. It arrived the third or fourth week making it just in time for our vacation beginning August 1st. I had gathered up materials to make a "lean-on" house for it. This took two days to build. It was to be a light, roll-up, carry-on-the-top sort of thing.

It was a Friday morning and we left home, gassed up at Charley Schweitzer's station in Ashley, hollered at the other employees across the street at the garage and drove out.

The next Friday noon, we arrived in Anchorage, 4,400 miles later, in time to attend the Salmon Fishing Derby in Seward. It was a big affair. Cannons were fired and boats took off for the contest of getting the first fish, the largest fish, the most fish, etc. There are so many boats, the harbor uses stop lights to control traffic on the inlet and outlet. They even broadcast the event over the radio.

The next day, on the way to view the Portage glacier, I saw a man stopped along the road who was out of gas. We gave him a lift and later went on to the glacier. When we parked the wagon by the lake, Millie stepped out of the car and said, "If we don't see another thing but this, it was all worth it." Huge mountains of blue ice floated in mirror-like still blue water. A voice beside me asked how far I thought it was over to the glacier. I turned to see who was talking and it was the man we had helped earlier. He was the park Ranger. I said, "It looks like a quarter or so of a mile over there." The big glacier would slide down the canyon, break off and the pieces floated out there.

We drove out to the airport to see about getting some tickets to fly out to Mt. McKinley, the tallest mountain in western hemisphere. The tickets were \$13 each and we got two for the next day. We spent time driving around a very pretty, quiet lake surrounded with light airplanes. (After returning home, Roger Benjamin's wife told me that his plane was there. She lived in Harlingen a short way from our park and had remarried.) We flew out to and around and

around the great mountain. Close passes on all sides revealed the forms and depth of ice and snow. It was a rare sunny day then and visibility was perfect. The flight out and back over the top of range after range was something. The plane was full, carrying about forty people.

We ferried back part way through a passage called the Inside Passage. Ships ran close to the coast and between mainland and near islands. I could spit on an island and main land at one time.

A girl from Waterloo saw our license plant and hunted us down in a small cafeteria while enroute. It was Dorothy Bricker, a nurse at a twelve bed hospital, who had flown up for a week-end trip. What a small world!

We were back on the dusty highway to Vancouver and on to southern California where we visited with Jim and Nina.

We returned home 10,000 miles later and sold the wagon the first day back to work to Chuck Tagtemeyer. It had 10,000 miles + 1 and we were happy.

Much could be written of that trip. Our temporary house served us so well. It took no more than 10 minutes to set up. We ate and dressed and kept house in it and slept in the wagon. There were screens on the side and rear windows to give ventilation. We drove 1,200 miles on the gravel roads of the Alcan, one way, at 35 mph all day, each day. We left the radio on but it never picked up a single word for four days straight. At Hubert's suggestion, we took a Standard Oil credit card for most of our gas expenses. We put \$450 under the floor mat and I took out a twenty dollar bill to use for whatever came up. The new car had to be serviced at 1,000 miles. I paid that and then had to replace an air mattress that leaked down every nite. I purchased a sweater up in the Yukon Territory. After about five days of only dusty roads (there were three towns in 1,284 miles) I said, "If we ever reach a bit of civilization again, I'm going to get a dish of ice cream!" Millie said, "If we do, I'm gonna have a hamburger!" As we rolled into Anchorage, we stopped at the first thing we saw. I had \$1.67 left of the twenty dollar bill and we blew it all right there.

After the various things we did and saw, plane and ferry, tolls and on to California then home, we had \$150 left to put

felt badly because she was out of film for our camera. She took me to her competitor there and then so we could acquire what we needed. An inquiry at the Tourist Center was all that was needed to find out if any ship buildings were open for tours. The lady said that it they weren't opened on Sunday but directed us to the street that goes by these places. We drove around them. Here, a man was already at one company. It was his own. He was the President and he gave us a guided tour then went on to church. He told in detail how they built these vessels. The one we saw was half completed.

We saw townspeople coming to the beach. We watched them walk out to the many boats on dry land, load fishing gear and pop coolers. Mom, Dad and the children would sit in these boats and visit for 15 to 20 minutes waiting for the tide to come in. It comes in fast and all the boats were soon floating and disappeared as we ate lunch in our trailer. Some area tides reach a height of 20 to 30 feet and where the ground has a gentle slope, it comes in fast and recedes fast. They returned before the tide recedes, anchored and waited for the tide to go out then the boats rested on the stony, gravelly dry land and they would walk back to their vehicles.

Fishing vessels are huge. A crew would get together, receiving no salary, and be gone for a month at sea and return when loaded with fish all cleaned and salted. It could take a week or more sometimes eight to nine days to unload it all by hand, sorting as they did. When done, the fish would be sold to a fish packer then they divided up the money.

The small army of lobster fisherman with cords and cords of lobster traps had the bay covered with colored floats; one for each trap that rested on the bottom. As men came by in small boats, they would pull up only their own trap and remove the catch. They helped each other and have a language of their own.

The Bay of Fundy State Park is truly a place of interest as Rangers give free talks on tides, fishing, weather, water, etc. We ferried across to Prince Edward Island landing at Cape Borden. I picked up several black stones there. Several years later, I presented one to Olive Nice in front of the congregation one evening after a Children's

Day program she had. It took her by surprise. She looked at it, looked at me and said, "Why this stone is from Cape Borden!" Her hometown was Charlottetown and as a girl she spent much time at Cape Borden. I know she still keeps the stone. We visited Roscoe and Olive in Siloam Springs, Oklahoma where they went to be house parents at Cookson Hills to troubled children and we commented on how she recognized where the black polished stone that I had presented her came from. I saw her a couple of years ago and she told me it was still a keepsake in her home.

Our new car did "ping" on their low octane gasoline pulling the trailer. I went to the Pontiac garage there and they all gathered around the 389 engine. Their Pontiacs were all 6 cylinder in 1965. They had seen two Grand Prix with 283V8's but none of these. They had to get a manual out to learn how and where to set the timing. We sat in the lounge and read the papers. It took them 45 minutes to set it back a few degrees. The service manager came and said the mechanics wanted me to take them for a ride in it. I told them to go ahead and drive it, but they wouldn't so the manager took them for a spin.

We spent a day driving the Cabot Trail and Arcadia Park. When we got to a cliff overlook and guard rail area, we parked the car as pictured on the post card and in advertisement scene. Millie stood as the girl in the ad. We duplicated the picture for the fun of it. We encountered bagpipers here and there along the way. One school band had just won first prize in a run-off contest. They performed for us and then took our little black poodle dog, Pe' Pe', and passed him around. When a person on a trip finds unusual scenes and deviates from the regularly traveled route, the results are healthful when one returns home and recalls these. It comes to mind the really great thing lasting is the people met along the way.

I sold the car with 33,000 miles on it and told the new owner that I had never tuned the engine and didn't recall even raising the hood. Charley, at the garage, tuned the engine and called me. It seems there was a rusty colored sharp 'screwdriver' in a spark plug boot and had been there since the car was new. It was left there by a mechanic up

sight. From fence to fence about 300 feet wide and twice that in depth, a flock of turkeys met us. The road was solid with turkeys pressed together marching toward us. They surrounded the wagon on all side and only two people, a man and wife, moved the flock of thousands to a field down the road. After they all passed, we continued on.

1965 - Making use of the new travel trailer enroute to Pennsylvania with Ralph and Lola Phillips along. What fun we had in Lancaster county and at the Kutytown Festival.

1968 - Easter time, the new Winnebago motorhome arrived at Bryan, Ohio. We ordered it in the fall of 1967. We waited impatiently 'til Easter '68. The dealer called and we went to see it. I had to drive it home. We couldn't wait for service and check-over. We took Ralph and Lola on Sunday to visit John at Purdue University. Before we arrived, Lola put a birthday cake in the oven as we drove! It was all new and fun to us. I guess we were hyped up kids on a joy ride. It was a real fun day when John came out.

1972 - We were in Calgary and decided to go up the Husky Tower, a space needle with a great view of the city, the river and we could see the little island and our campsite. It was a nice morning and a pleasant feeling and view set us up for a great day. It was a short trip walking thru the nearby hotel all ready for a visit from Prince George that day. There were flowers everywhere.

Driving thru Kansas City, Missouri and on into Independence, we were hunting President Harry Truman's house. He was there. He and friends and the Secret Service all on the big lawn behind a wrought iron fence. It was exciting. We later stopped at the edge of town and had our lunch. I walked out and forgot my jacket. I wonder if it is still there. Oh no, I wasn't excited!

We were standing on the sidewalk at Key West, Florida to watch for President "Ike" to come by. The road sign had been changed from Truman Road to Eisenhower

Drive. We watched as his plane circle overhead. The procession came past at about 30 mph. Ike was standing up in the rear seat of an open car. As he came to us, he was looking the other way. Just at that moment I yelled, "Hello Ike!" loud and clear. He turned instantly, waved and gave a big smile. Millie had snapped the camera and had a good picture of the secret service car directly behind the President. (she was the only person to do so)

SCHOOL BUS

After Millie and I were married in 1939 and had rented the 40 acre farm of Fred Durst plus some extra ground or added a job in two years, I became interested in the bus driving job for the Ashley school.

Hugh Hamman, who lived just south of Ashley, notified the township trustee, Lee Wise, and the advisory board of Forrest Miller, Al Smith and Cris Funk, that he would no longer drive the bus as of April 23, 1941. Mr. Hamman had driven the bus route for two years. This was a surprise to the trustee as those contracts were let for a four year term and that had only been done two years before.

In those days, the trustee listed what routes were planned and set forth the requirements. They consisted of the driver owning and providing the truck chassis needed. The driver would be responsible for all expenses related to the chassis operation such as gas, oil and maintenance. The township would supply the body and pay for installation, care for the body, seat repair, glass, door or whatever was needed.

On a prescribed day, all those interested would submit a sealed bid in an envelope setting forth the amount requested per mile of driving. The township established the mileage.

It may have been that at the time of the regular four year interval for advertised bids, Mr. Hamman was not familiar with the accurate cost of operation. He placed his bid on the route of his choice, stating he would do such service as required for the amount of 7¢ per mile. The seasoned drivers who came back to rebid at that all time all bid 9¢ per mile. Hugh had lived on a route where the previous driver wanted to quit. It all worked out well until Mr. Hamman purchased the four

back in the bank when we got home. Our gas costs came later and were about \$600, I believe. It seemed little for all that we did.

Our 30 day trip produced some very interesting stories. One was that Millie had managed to prepare our food supply for three meals per day. It was all packed in one pasteboard box and none of it needed any refrigeration. She also had made a little book of meals she had packaged together for 30 days. She would look in her book and tell me what we would have for breakfast, lunch and supper and it came out just that way. I saw her open a can like a grapefruit juice can and remove a whole small chicken one nite and had fried chicken. As she withdrew the chicken, its legs raised up as it came out. We had good food and never suffered there.

Our "tent house" was so unusual and served us so well. Sometimes people would come by and take pictures of us in there eating or writting letters. It was made of two small pipes bolted together at the end and opened like a compass; the sharp end inserted into the ground and the top end fastened to the elevated arm on the roof luggage carrier or the station wagon. A canvas, hooked to the elevated bar secured to the roof, was unrolled and dropped down the side and was secured with door springs that exposed two smaller ones that closed each end as desired. A light hung from the center (X) cross arms so we had light as needed to cook, dress, make journal entries, etc. then enter the side door of the wagon to sleep. It worked well.

You may wonder how we carried it. Well, I laid the canvas on the ground, laid the pipes on top, rolled it tightly in a roll about 10 feet long and 8" in diameter, laid it on top of the wagon and with two straps, secured it to the luggage rack each morning.

Quite some time after the trip, an older couple drove in one Sunday morning to see us. They wanted me to tell them or show them or draw a picture of that house we used on our trip. They had heard of it and wanted to travel but had little money to spend for motels and restaurants. I said, "Better yet, I'll get it from the upstairs." I set it up loosely to their Falcon wagon before their eyes. He asked if I would sell it to them. I said, "No, but I'll give it to you. It has paid for itself many times and you can have it." His wife began to cry. " Oh, we want to pay

you for it", said the man. "OK then, how about \$10?" They were so happy because he wouldn't have been able to make it. He needed someone to do it for him.

After retirement, I was driving a van load of folks on a 5 day trip into Canada. The second day, the oldest, smallest lady in the group said to me. "Are you the Reinoehl that went to Alaska in a station-wagon-tent-house?" I said that I was. She said, "I thought so. My husband and I have been talking. We bought that tent from you and we used it to travel out west in the state parks for a long time."

A RECAP OF THINGS WE TALK ABOUT OF TRIPS, ETC.

1960 - October. We were driving the up-ramp to the roof parking lot at Cobo Hall in downtown Detroit. A policeman stepped from the walkway holding out his hand for me to stop. "Why Me?", I thought. He smiled when he saw my concern. He just wanted to see the new car. We had sold our 1960 Pontiac and ordered a 1961 for show day. It was a rosegold color. He said he saw a picture on TV and just wanted to look it over. It was the first one he saw. He stopped the whole line of cars while he looked over the car and then motioned us on the up-ramp!

1962 - Summer. Guy Lepley retired. He never drove a new car for himself. He always told me, "Cars are to sell, not to buy." He came to the desk, took down the Pontiac album and said he wanted to order a new car! We went thru the options; 4 door, etc and when the order was finished I said, "You forgot, do you want white wall tires?" "I don't want any." I said, "A green car won't run without 'em" but "NO". The car came in thirty days later. The boys got the car ready. Mike waxed it and we set it in the showroom then called G.C. He came right up, walked in, took one look, turned to me and said, "Give me an order for four white walls from Newnams Tire Co.!"

1963 - We left for our trip to Alaska in August. We were traveling west on 120 east of Howe, Indiana and came upon a

year old bus from the previous driver and began operation only to learn that the 7¢ per mile would not pay out. The interest on the purchase, gas, oil, repairs, the twice per day run denying opportunity for other jobs and winter demands were just too great. He drove one year and realized the mistake and when he started the second year, he informed the trustee he would complete that year but would return his signed contract because he would not be able to continue. The trustee agreed to relieve him of his signed contract and thus on the off year advertised for one driver to complete the contract time.

I thought it would be a cash income each month that would be ours and not require a share of crops we raised on rented ground. I later talked to Mr. Wise about the job. He told me if I was interested to turn in my name and the board would consider it along with others they might get. I learned later they had two other names; Fred Ellert of Ashley and Riley King of Waterloo. I was notified one day that they had decided to give it to me. I went over to talk to Mr. Wise. He said they all four agreed that I could do it all right but the only thing was I'd have to quit driving so fast. (I was running a paper route each Sunday morning and he had reason to say this.)

I went to see Mr. Hamman and we agreed on a purchase price for the chassis of \$225. By doing this, the township avoided the expense of remounting the body on another chassis I might buy.

I drove the bus home and looked it all over. It was a 1935 Ford ton and a half chassis with an 85 hp V8 engine. There was no power steering or power brakes; it had only mechanical brakes. I was to learn much about them later along with the transverse buggy type front spring. This was the fall of 1941 making this unit six years old. The body was a 24 passenger Carpenter built unit as rugged and serviceable as one could buy. It was a trouble free body and I developed great respect for the Carpenter body of southern Indiana.

I took the bus to the Ford garage and had them check it all over and do whatever they deemed necessary. The engine ran well and had adequate power. I felt the Ford unit should go back to the Ford garage for service and all maintenance which was at Waterloo.

The owner was Wallace Latham and the man to see. The man who did the work and made those engines run was Clark Kelly. Clark was a hard working man who understood Ford V8 engines better than anyone short of Henry. He had the greatest sense of humor that was his trademark. Well, this time everything was in good running order and I took it home. I would always remember starting out the first day and the first year of picking up kids on the morning route. There were many surprises to come. The first came in two weeks. All the drivers would file into Fred's office at the Ashley school. We would stand in line there and were given our checks. I signed my voucher and picked up my check. It was much smaller than the other drivers! I learned I was expected to do the remaining two years of the existing contract at the bid of 7¢ that Mr. Hamman had agreed. I was sick! Now I knew of the 9¢ per mile contract for the other drivers and I assumed that when Mr. Hamman couldn't make it on 7¢, they would, of course, write mine for the 9¢ figure as the others. No, indeed not. I would drive for the two years as written. The tax money was budgeted for that and would not be changed. I made the expression at my retirement party that I did not cash a check the first two years. That wasn't true, don't worry. They were cashed but some had to be put with them to keep the thing running. The engine had to be replaced soon and I didn't have the money for that. I told Mr. Latham I'd pay half when I drove it out with a new motor and the other half October 1st. Clark put in the new engine and it served me well as I drove the bus then for 10 years. The new engine, costing \$300, was a good investment and required only regular maintenance the rest of the 10 year period. When it would begin to loose power, I would take it in to Latham and Clark knew what was wrong. He would go up front to the parts room and come back with an object in each hand; a distributor in one and a fuel pump in the other. I never knew which one it needed but those two things worked every time. It was 16 years old when I got a new one in 1951. I tried to take care of the body and may have overdone that because the trustee had to pass me by for a new body the second and third time granting other drivers new ones because of their shoddy conditions. This Carpenter

body was too good to replace so I was stuck another year and another when I wanted to get a new chassis. I kept thinking that maybe next year they will tell me to get a truck and they would get the body.

As the county had few units to plow snow, we learned to be prepared to open the roads for other vehicles. Sometimes drifts were 4 feet deep for long stretched of road and one had to sight the telephone poles to steer by as snow came over the hood and blocked out the windshield except the upper outter corners. Third gear wound up, later second, to first and finally stopping. I'd put it in reverse and take another run for it. We often ran dual chains on those rear wheels and when they broke, you sat right there 'til you dug out around the wheels, laid on your back and repaired the chains and put 'em back on -- no go without 'em!

The bus had little heat. A small under-the-dash heater up front was the only one. The only help at the windshield was a small defroster fan for that big area of glass.

Now, a load of kids released much moisture from breath and the glass always was frosted. We put a frame picture type heater on the windshield to keep off the frost. It had a series of electric wires that, when turned on, warmed the glass. It worked but had its trouble also. When the heater was on, the lights dimmed way down for lack of sufficient current. The generator only put out 35 amps to run the engine and keep the battery up for starting and serve all the lights. I had to shut off almost everything to clear the windshield. The kids had to dress warmly yet the minute you had to stop for whatever reason, they may stomp their feet to keep warm.

There were two main things that gave me problems. The first was the brakes. They were rods and clevis arrangement. There was no hydraulic system. Now when you pressed the brake, you could bring the bus to a stop if you used them carefully. If I would press hard on them for one quick stop like in traffic or needing to avoid a dog or tractor in the road, the small rods that actuated the brakes would stretch from the pull and the brakes were less effective. When you arrived home, it meant tightening them on all four wheels before you could go out on the next trip. The trick here was to keep

them even so the bus would not pull to the right or left when you applied the brakes.

I knew many of the people on our route. It was route 2 of the Waterloo mail route. I wanted to do it well, not just do it. It took much work on the bus for it to be safe and dependable. There were two things of constant concern. The brakes that I've just mentioned and the situation of rain falling leaving great water holes and areas of water that had to be driven thru. Water was always in the brake shoes. There were no shields at the drums to repel the water. Now just being wet meant the need to be cautious and not expect much 'til you could dry them out. Normally this wasn't that much of a problem as the drums were warm from frequent stops. However, if the weather turned cold after the rain in winter months like it does, one could be driving thru water holes breaking ice an inch thick, only to throw water into the brakes. Then they would freeze and when you stopped to pick up the kids and applied the brakes to stop, you couldn't release them! I carried a gallon can with kerosene and dry corn cobs in the bus. I'd crawl underneath and place a lighted cob on the wheel letting the flames come up around the brake drum to release it. The bus sat right there in the road 'til it thawed out then we went on our way and tried to avoid it again. The other reoccurring problem was the front springs. This spring was a transverse set of leaves that extended from one front wheel to the other; from left to right directly above the front axel. There were a series of leaves, like six or more. They were arched up in the center like a buggy spring to support the engine and whatever weight of the cab and contents. The frame of the '35 Ford chassis had a rather deep channel cross- member located to sit down over these leaves and was secured with one, only one, bolt that extended thru it and thru the holes in the center of the six spring leaves. This arrangement worked satisfactorily on some units, I guess, but not for a school bus body. Remember, these were truck chassis in 1935, not built or designed for specialized jobs. The Carpenter body was heavy and well built. There was considerable weight above the center of gravity. Now one had to turn corners carefully, empty or loaded, because a tip of

went well, for I knew that if I was going to succeed, I had to get tough and set myself above and apart from them. *I was the driver and they were only the passengers.* I had to express firm authority. That worked well and it allowed a relaxing reign a bit later. It made driving easier and a safer bus with little need to look back in the group to catch the culprit. We had less and less to discipline then. You could love 'em and enjoy 'em but one had to be firm and play no favorites. In the 38 years of regular driving, I experienced very few discipline problems, maybe so few as to see little use to mention any.

My bus passengers were almost entirely made up of farm children who had to work; do chores, tend livestock and had learned responsibility and respect so discipline was no problem for me. Yet kids are not under strict orders as in a class room and a driver's top priority is driving safely and concentrating on that act. Young folks with few great worries were inclined to be a happy lot and it should be that way. If the kids are happy and relaxed and full of fun, little things will happen. There is a big difference in the act of impulse and a joke or trick is to be expected. It's the one who has a habit of breaking a rule that you must take head on. The others you enjoy. An example of this is a new boy from an obviously rough and tough family, along with his sister, rode the bus. As I was a rookie the first year of driving, I was truly an amateur. The boy, a McInturf, swore at his sister, loudly. Everyone else got quiet instantly for he had violated one of our foremost rules. What now? I stopped as soon as possible. I went back and put my hand on his shoulder telling him that sort of language will not be tolerated. I laid it on firm. "Don't ever, ever say anything like that again on the bus because if you do, I'll be back here and you'll well remember it for a long time." I was hyped up. This was one rule I set forth and was determined to keep at all cost. I was shook a bit as I got back in the seat and pulled out into the traveling portion of the road. I had just shifted from low to second gear when he did it again! I stopped, set the emergency brake and ran about four steps toward him. He was out of his seat and ran to the back door, opened it and jumped out

before I arrived. He never looked back and kept running down the road. He quit school and never rode the bus again. The boys would tease me about chasing kids off the bus. I later learned he'd spent some time in jail and had so much trouble that I felt sorry.

One nite on the way home, as the bus was nearly empty, a girl gathered up her books with two hands and threw them into the empty seat across the aisle. They hit the side panel with a loud bang. She was a Strite, a very pretty well liked and talented girl and never a discipline problem. It shocked me. I didn't dare let it pass. I put on my stern look and said, "Now, don't ever do that again." The next morning she brought me four sheets of paper where she had written "I will never throw my books again" written 100 times! Things of impulse were often just that, done without thought and out of character.

A new girl became a regular passenger and a couple of seasoned riders reported to me, on the quiet, that her language was terrible. I told them I knew the home she came from and I could believe it. The next nite when school let out, I walked to the front door to meet her. As we walked back, I simply said that I wanted her to know it was reported she used rough language on our bus. I said I had not heard it but if I did, I'd deal with it right then and there. "We have never had that on this bus and we will not start now. I want you to know that before something happens." That's all it took. There never was a need to call her name in six years.

I picked up Dean Stoy one morning with only two more stops to make before running on into school. Dean was nearly driving age and was husky and full of challenge-testing his neighborhood association to us. (he lived next door to my home) He decided to move up in the world. He sat down in a seat and occupied the entire seat. When we stopped at the Gatez house, Delores got on and saw only Dean in that seat and proceeded to go to there expecting to share it with him. He refused to slide over and give her room. I was taken by surprise and for a second, I hesitated. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. She, sensing his lack of invitation, went to another very crowded seat where they had quickly made room. All was quiet. I already had the bus in gear so avoided an

the body would exert tremendous pull on the center tie bolt on the front spring. The bolt would break while turning a corner if the body tipped enough but one would not know it happened at the time. The first indication would be that the location of the spokes on the steering wheel were different. When I'd get home, I'd look underneath to check the front end and find that the body had gradually slid to one side and was no longer in the center of the axle. One front wheel would be closer to the fender on the outside than the other wheel. This was quite a job to correct. Often I did it at night, after the chores were done, by lantern light! I'd place a heavy jack under the front bumper and raise the body off the springs high enough to remove the top half of the broken bolt. Then replace it with a new bolt and slide all spring leaves to get the bolt threaded down thru each one letting the jack down little by little sliding the front axle and wheels to get it all back to the center again. Once I got the wheels all lined up and the weight back on the springs, I'd double nut the bolt and it was ready. Now the front wheels rolled in line with the rear duals instead of off to one side. This happened about once or twice a year and how I got it repaired each time with such little light outdoors on frozen ground, with the body jacked up so high on only one support, and didn't get hurt, I just don't know. My guardian angel certainly must have been on my shoulder.

Much of my problems the first two years were of my own making. I was always in a hurry as I was share farming for Fred Durst and for Millie's father, Vern. I tried to keep them happy and not short their work by my taking on the school bus route. I tried to sort out time to stop at home to see Mom and Pop on the way past when the bus was empty. A good time to do this was in the mornings after dropping off the kids at school. I came back past their house and they'd have chores done and we could visit a bit. Mom was always interested in what we would be doing that day; what Millie was going to do and just general interest in our welfare.

One morning while visiting with them, I told Dad that there was a flock of ducks on a pond near our house. The pond was surrounded with standing corn and we could get up close to them. He said, "Do you think we should go duck hunting?" I said, "Yes,

lets do." Well, Mom laughed saying, "I'll clean *all* the ducks you two can shoot." Dad got his old double barrel, climbed in the bus with me and we went to my house. I got the single barrel shot gun he had given me and we walked thru the corn field to the pond. We were cautious and quiet. We worked our way near the waters edge and surveyed the flock. We became anxious to shoot, I guess. I took out my red hanky, held it under my gun and we both began to sight into the flock. As the ducks were moving, I watched then at what I thought would be a good time. I let the hanky drop. We both fired. Nine ducks were laying out there. I walked out and got them gathered up. Mom thru up her hands when we walked in with a peach basket full of ducks. Pop and I had fun teasing her but we got to work and cleaned them all right then.

Our buses were expected to get to school each day. Bad weather or not, we went. Now I don't think the pressure was as great to be on time as it is now and we did the best we could. I have bucked snow banks so deep on the side roads that when wedged in, it was so deep, you couldn't open the door. I'd have to go out the back with a shovel and start digging back there. Drivers always carried dry gloves, shovels and chains for emergencies. Mr. Fredrick was not prone to call off school for ice or snow. The ice was always a problem but in the snow you could judge your speed and control to stay in the road, but sheet ice, when thawing or in light misty rain, was treacherous. We ran many miles on the curving narrow roads that taxed the skill of every driver, young or old.

Northern Indiana is in a medium belt of weather change from cold to thawing temperatures right at the break and ice was a common thing. It did afford some beautiful scenes that could not be described. As early morning disclosed wire fence, weeds, trees and posts all dressed in a metallic-like armor glistening in the sun.

The first year was a long hard year of learning.

While I had bus trouble the first year, I also had passenger problems. It seems I knew so many of the kids around there either working with them threshing in the summer or met them in church. I was too close to them. I guess I thought to control them, I'd be one of them. They killed me! The next year

had to walk the lane and then wait on the bus to come. It became an obsession with me and it worked well. By establishing the route in September at about five miles per hour less than I expected to run it, I always could pick up time between stops in bad weather later on. Some years I tried to get the time at each house established in three weeks and then make up a letter with names and arrival times at each house. The letter included my telephone number and instructed parents to call me if I did something wrong or could help them in some way. I gave the school number to call if they wished to report a problem on my bus and chose to tell the supervisor instructing them that he would keep their call confidential. It all worked well and made it possible for me to leave later each morning for we very, very seldom waited on a child large or small. The key word here is seldom, but sometimes we did.

After reviewing our program to be on time and getting all the kids aware and thus police themselves, we did pride ourselves, our group, that of running for the bus was all it took to be on time and the inevitable would happen. We came over the hill from the west to approach the Landers' farm. Now the Landers were a good family who moved from Ashley to raise their children on a farm. They purchased the farm where Millie, Barb and I had lived many years. We knew them so well and Don and Charlotte were good pleasant, honest folks with six good kids; two boys and three girls, rode the bus. They were lively yes, but good fun kids raised to respect adults and not to shirk responsibility. It was always a pleasure to run into any one of them. This one morning, however, one boy was missing. This was unusual for while Charlotte worked in Kendallville and left very early and Don drove to IHC in Ft. Wayne leaving home at 6 or 6:30 a.m., these kids were always out there waiting. As we stopped, I noticed Andy was missing. The girls boarded first as Ed, the older boy waited patiently. As Ed got on, I spoke to him supposing Andy was sick or such I said, "What happened to Andy, Ed?" He said, "He'll be out in a minute." This was a surprise that I wasn't prepared for. Showing great patience, I waited a minute, watching the house and my watch. I then said, "Ed, what's wrong with Andy?" The answer was the

same--"He'll be out in a minute." We waited another minute and was getting well exercised. Now I said, "Listen Ed, I mean I want to know about Andy. Did he get married, move away from home or just what? I don't want to park here all day." I started to get the same reply from Ed when he interrupted his answer to say, "Here he comes now." Now I was glaring at Ed with my best glare because I thought I deserved an answer I wasn't getting. I took those boys to our church Father/Son Banquets and I liked them. I wanted better cooperation from those boys. I broke my gaze at Ed to look for Andy, expecting to see him running for the bus at full speed. I was stunned. He was walking; slowly, head down, with no effort to speed up. This did get me good and I thought I will nip this in the bud. This boy needs some of my valuable advise. I was putting together a speech and determined to keep my voice down. When he hit the first step, I'd be ready for him. At that point, all the kids were wondering what I would say. When he came up on the first step where we were eyeball to eyeball, I started my speech--"ANDY!" That's all I got said when he looked me in the eye and said with a rather loud voice and a look of disdain that I wasn't familiar with, he said, "I just got on the john when you drove up." Well, the kids all laughed. I cancelled my speech and we moved out, red neck and all. As we had some of the finest high school girls with high standards and I didn't look back for a while. I just concentrated on my driving!

I suppose school bus driving was only a hobby to some or a little something to do in the winter when farming was at a standstill. Perhaps the same to the lady who would drive only long enough to pay for a washer or dryer. I saw this sort of thing but it wasn't that way for me. It became a way of life and a picture of life as it really is, not polished and painted, not shined up to glisten and impress. You saw it like it was. This was the interesting part. I don't know how it is, but kids have certain abilities lost to them in later years. You know little rabbits give off no scent at an early age when that little white dot remains in their forehead. So it is. Kids can tell at a glance insincerity. How, I don't know. I often did wish I had that when selling

immediate confrontation, I went on to school. I was still in low gear when I knew I had made a costly mistake, both in my career and this boy's. Now the bus was picking up speed and I couldn't do a thing. I was in trouble. Dean was wearing a pleasant smile that I didn't appreciate and for several reasons, the least was the fact that we had some other boys who were learning to ride the bus also. As we went the two miles to school, I knew I had to do something. As we approached school, I decided on a plan. He put on his show for the kids to see, so I would too. What I should have done was asked him to remain in the bus and had an eyeball talk with him, but I was young, desperate and took a short cut. As soon as the bus came to a stop I was the first one out and remained at the door as each one disembarked. When Dean came down the step and stepped onto the ground, I grabbed him under the arm pits, lifted him off the ground, shoved him up the side of the bus and held him there and said, "Don't ever do that again" and so on. Well, it took him so by surprise, he just hung there on the side of the bus where all the kids could see. I recall saying, "Dean, why did you do that?" I went beserk but it sure got the job done. I was ashamed of the "gone over the hill" effect, but his actions seemed like a threat to this job for a young driver. I only recall once of such quick action again in all those years.

We had no training in those days, no preparation. When I began driving, I asked Lee Wise, trustee, "Where does the route go?" He told me a kid to pick up first and he could show me. That was my training!

I also learned it was a good practice to sometimes use the group to help discipline. It became the rule to never allow the windows to be lowered below a painted line. The kids would drop them to the bottom for more air. I told them they could do so as long as the bus was on school property to get a breeze or to visit with others but this bus is not pulling out if one window is down. Of course we all wanted to get home at nite quickly. They went up fast when the other busses began to move out and we were still sitting!

One has to guard against hasty and unreasonable punishment for a minor violation. Maybe it's the weather, your day, your health, but whatever, discipline

had to be consistent with, no favorites. I made a bad mistake that I would live to regret to this day. Lawrence Miller was a friend in my school days. He was a member of St. Michael's church and an A-1 person. After his early death, his young son, Mark, was still in grade school. He was a good boy and helped his mother. The two lived together and she had every reason to be proud of Mark. One nite I overheard Mark and another student talking and Mark indicated he was going to visit so and so and stay overnite with that person. The other boy responded immediately with the expression "Can you do that? Can you stay all nite at his house. What will your mom say?" Mark remarked lightly, "Mom said I could. She doesn't care. Sure I can. After all, I am potty trained." Well, here I went wrong and panicked. I said, "Mark, come up here. I want to talk to you." As I drove along, I took him to task without thinking and with careless choice of words I said, "Mark, your mother would be ashamed to hear you talk like that. Your father, if he were here, would be disappointed and in this bus with all the kids together, you know better than to talk like that. Don't ever do that again. I'm surprised at you." Now keep in mind, this was years ago and were not educated by TV and radio also because Lawrence was no longer here, I quickly assumed the role of "father" without permission. Right away I knew I was wrong and when I could, I went over and talked to Susie and Mark about the incident. I was ashamed of the abrupt manner in which I corrected him. If I'd have thought, I would have asked him to remain on the bus where we could discuss it, but I chose to hit him instantly as I did. Whenever I see him or Susie to this day, I want to apologize again for the crude and careless manner I used. They are good people and I was wrong.

I had learned the need to have the best cooperation from parents in this work. One way to do that was by example in all ways, speech, dress, humor, attitude and promptness. I tried my best to have the bus at the pick-up point at the same time each day. When it was foggy or the roads were bad, it was more difficult but also more important to do so. We had many who lived back long lanes and they couldn't walk from the house when they saw the bus coming but

cars or going in the booth to vote, but you loose that around 10 to 12 years.

Jody was in about the third grade. He had a long lane to walk to the bus. He was such a neglected boy and this was shaping his personality rapidly. He had no mean streak or resentment but he would do the darndest things to gain attention. I couldn't believe it one morning as I approached his lane. (he was the first stop so was the first one getting on the bus) There he was up on top of the big end post at the driveway. He was standing upright on top I'd guess about six feet above the ground with a ditch on our side. Besides that, as I stopped, he jumped up and out into the ditch! He got in the bus. I kept him next to me, had one arm around him as we moved on to the second stop, telling him never to try that again. I told him that he could possibly break an arm or a leg and because his mother had no car, what would we do, and all that. The next day the same darn thing. I tried to be more firm and yet I knew it meant nothing to tell him his mother would care, because she didn't. He'd have no breakfast. She never got up in the morning. He would get up, come to the road and there he would wait and wait. I knew that. Well, the third day I had to try a different approach. I left home a bit early and as I drew near, I saw him up there again. As I approached, I did not look his way directly, slipped the gear shift to neutral, coasted up gently, never looking at him, and came to a stop the lights and sign on and then took my Reader's Digest in hand and began to read. I had a couple minutes and had to use 'em up. I never saw him fly, just heard a knocking on the door. I opened it and he got in and sat down behind me. I closed the book and we went on. He never did the "leap for life" thing anymore but once in a while he would tire of waiting and come to meet me hiding in the grass along the road to surprise me. He did, but not often. We took care of that.

One of the most difficult things I found was to see the small, poor, neglected child come to school the first couple of years with near normal acceptance then about the third grade see the classmates begin to withdraw and avoid them, then downright shun them. This would grow to where they would be alone in a seat with other seats over crowded and at times, I'd order someone to sit there. I'd hear all kinds of whining like,

"but they smell bad, their clothes are dirty" and such. The obvious lack of knowing good grooming practices began the "outcast" role.

One such family like this lived near us. The father was a truck driver and would come home now and then. They had no car and little to eat and were so unkept. This would all have been less noticeable but the older boy was very smart. Rinker was their name. I had talked with his teacher and she confirmed my suspicions. He was all "straight A's" from day 1. It was a shame to see this happen but he had few friends when suddenly they moved to Ohio or Pennsylvania.

There were experiences of great inspiration that would have lasting effects not only this driver but the students as well. One such was the life of Sharon Kalb. Wilbur and Margaret Kalb had been disappointed in earlier married life with miscarriages or infant death and were deprived of a family. When Sharon was born and appeared to be doing well, they were gratified. Early in her school life, she developed the symptom of a serious illness. The doctors said she had Cystic Fibrosis, an incurable disease.

It was my privilege to transport her to and from school each day through her school life. For a few years, her illness wasn't very noticeable and no one believed it but as time went on, we noticed she was not growing. When school resumed in the fall, her friends were taller and huskier, stronger and had matured but she remained much as she was. By high school, she was so small and tiny, so frail and delicate. I am sure she hurt in more ways than one because in the mirror I'd see her look out the window with a dry expressionless look but her friends never saw that. She presented the image of fun, of jokes. She was a loving girl with the admiration of us all. As her disease progressed, the doctors told Wilbur and Margaret that she could live but a short time. She began to miss school. Sometimes she would miss a day or two and then return. It was painful to see the effort she put forth to walk to the bus, climb up the steps and slowly make her way to her seat. Sharon had many friends. We would stop the bus each week at her home and the bus kids on the evening homebound route would file in so orderly and respectfully to see her. She looked so white and tiny in the bed and yet she had the

greatest smile and would manufacture a twinkle in her eye when we came in. I think the bus kids were so aware of how much she wanted to live. It was her goal to graduate, but it was not to be. She will be remembered by a particular group of people for a long time. There was a lesson for her bus driver who saw it all.

It was about this time before the consolidated school was formed and the drivers had more control of their school bus. We could take "local" liberties with their use.

The Ashley PTA had some school at nite for the parents to visit. The kids would go to school evenings a few times to give the parents time to visit classes.

For two or three years, I ran the bus route in the evening at 6:30. I'd pick up all the kids that could go and drive to Angola and attend a movie. I would watch for a good comedy or musical and every other month we would do this. The kids looked forward to that trip. It cost little and was fun. For a time in the fall, I carried paper sacks in the bus. As we passed a lone apple tree near Gene Grates farm, I'd release a couple kids to pick up some apples. They were the old fashioned sheep nose apples. As frost approached, no one paid attention to them but our bus watched 'em. I had to pass there and continue a half mile beyond to deliver two children. Upon return, we would pick up the two who were waiting with their selected fruit. Sometimes I'd choose the best two kids I had. Other times I took a great risk when I would put off the two least dependable, trying to prove I trusted them, but I really never did. They always did the job though and never let us down but these acts were of risk and we were taking great chances. It all came to an end with the consolidation.

The community was so warm and friendly and trusting, it was rewarding to see both parents step out of a barn door in the early morning doing chores together, to wave goodbye to their kids. They'd send little goodies to the drivers and write notes of appreciation. It was an era of unlocked doors, or accomodation of neighbor closeness and cooperation. It was life in the midwest that was rich and rewarding.

Early in my driving career, we approached the home of Bob and Lois Charleswood around 7:15 a.m. They had two

boys old enough to go to school and a baby a year old at home. As we came to a stop, I heard a yell, "Come Quick. Karen Jean is sick." I looked to the left. Sadonna Eckert was waving her arms to hurry. I proceeded to the top of the hill, turned on all lights and put one kid in charge and ran for the house. Mrs. Charleswood, Lois, returned from the barn and found the baby choked to death. Panic was everywhere. Lois was crying and Sadonna was trying to console her. I asked if anyone had called for help. "Yes, can't you hear the sirens" I was told. Lois held the baby who was a dull blue color. Bedlam was there. A car drove in, Van and Mary Breckbill, the Waterloo fireman drove in. They saw no fire and had no oxygen, backed out and left. I said, "We've got to do something." I took the baby and ran for the car. Sadonna drove her dad's car and we headed for Waterloo. I laid the baby across my lap, it's head hung down which opened it's throat, used one hand to work it's chest up and down. As we got to Waterloo I told 'Donna to be careful in town or we'll have a wreck. The baby made a noise twice and as we crossed the railroad, I saw it's little eyelids move. I laid the baby on a couch for Dr. Coleman to administer oxygen and work on her. She was never moved to the hospital 'til near noon. He told me later that he had never seen a child gone so far and return as that baby. Sadonna and I returned to find my bus gone and was told that Grant Kelly, fire chief, was driving the route. We met him at St. Michaels church and I took over and continued to the Ashley school. When that little baby grew to be out on the lawn to greet us and later thru 12 years of school, I always felt a bit of appreciation for her when she boarded the bus. Karen was a good passenger, a good person and now a good mother.

Karen Charleswood and Karen Sherck were close friends thru school; always sitting together, where you saw one, there was the other. It was a sad day when, in about their sophomore year, they had a nasty quarrel and seperated. One would sit near the front of the bus, and one would sit in the extreme back. I couldn't stand it. It was so sad how they would avoid one another. I had seen girls do this before and it was over quickly or else the wall would last for life.

he was saving. He said there was \$9 there. Shelly Miller, at Ashley, got on one morning with a gallon glass jug full of pennies. She told me there was \$25 there. 2500 pennies! Some little tykes would stop when they boarded and drop in two pennies and look around and smile. It was the Christmas spirit like you read about in the Digest.

When Christmas vacation came, Mr. Rahe, my bus driving supervisor, gave me permission to use the bus to take the money to Ft. Wayne and all the kids and parents that want to go. Well, we had a load and away we went one morning about 10 a.m. We had a pail of pennies and a sack of money also. I asked Ann Scranage and Mike Spurr to carry the \$50 pail between them and give it to Bob Seivers and Donny Mason carried another pail of \$92.49. They allowed me to pull up to the curb so all the kids could see thru the big window and watch them deliver our donation of \$142.49. Bob recognized the bus load by radio and they were clapping and so excited. I had told them on the way down we were going to keep out some money and go to McDonald's. That went over real well. Mr. Rahe was there to join us. He boarded the bus and congratulated them on the campaign and the amount. He said they had done so much good and were an inspiration to other bus riding kids. He expected other schools to do the same. We held a party with goodies and sang songs on the way home. I suppose as parents now, they tell their children what they did when they rode bus #47.

While these experiences effected the life of the driver, I believe it did so for the young passengers also.

I can remember but two or three close calls in all those years. The combination of two distinct tasks of an operator devoting his mind and skill to driving a bus safely and also maintaining discipline to the forty, fifty, sixty or more young, enthusiastic students, each a full-time job when weather and road conditions threatened, is a demanding experience.

The school bus driver in your community deserves your respect. They are not perfect, few of us are, but give them a reassuring word and a smile, they can use it!

The Shultz family lived east of Waterloo on County Road 22 about a third of a mile east of the Waterloo V.F.W. building.

When I started to drive in 1941, they had small children and soon there were five of them riding the bus to Ashley. There were two boys and three girls. I remember but one name, Glenda, and I'll always remember that.

I was just learning, just starting out new and had it all to learn. I wanted so much to do a good job. Mrs. Sudah was the music teacher and believed each kid should play some musical instrument (because they were born to) at least for a while until they proved they could not, conclusively. We found we had a great number of instruments to carry nite and morning. Finding a place to put them was a problem. I choose to keep them up front as the kids were packed in so tightly. The old '35 Ford with the Carpenter body left so little room for such things. Everyone carried a lunch bucket in those days, remember that.

Well, I rolled up to their house from the west at nite and proceeded to discharge the kids. The two boys were first off and grabbed their horns from the pile by the right side of my seat. As they did, they scattered the remaining ones so I had to reach down with my right hand and proceed to pull them together. As I did so, the girls piled out to run for the house as usual. When I got the pile corrected, I straightened up. They were all out of the bus and running for the house. I looked up and only saw four of them. I counted quickly again. Now, but three. I thought to myself, "how did that one get in the house so quickly?" Well, they must have pulled the shift lever in low and prepared to move on, I thought. I looked again, now only two running. I reved up the engine but couldn't let the clutch out. I was still puzzled. One of the kids called out "Let's go!" But I still hesitated, confused and delayed a few seconds more. Out to my left came a little girl, first grader, with two hands full of crayons. She had dropped them in front of the bus bumper, got down and was picking them up. The others had run on ignoring her. I had no crossover mirrors as now to see directly in front of the bumper. She was under there picking up her colors. It was frightening. That's how I learned to stop a bit back from directly across from the house so the kids had to depart at an angle so I could see where and how many there were.

I've seen that too. After about a week or maybe two, I decided to something about it. I asked Karen Sherck to go with me to Angola one nite. I told her I had some business up there. She agreed to ride along. Then I asked Karen Charleswood if she would like to go along to Angola. I told her I had a little business then we would go to a movie. "Sure," she would go. I negelected to tell her Karen Sherck would be along too. I picked up Karen S., happy as she always was and came bouncing out to the car. I told her mother we would return about 10 p.m. then I drove over to Karen C's. Now the test came as I entered the drive and it was not dark enough. Karen C. came out quickly and started for the car. As she approached and saw Karen S., she walked slower and slower but got into the car. Miss Sherck slipped over closer to me and Karen C. got in with little greetings but gave us a weak smile. It was a tense time and I got the car moving immediately. I told the girls I couldn't stand it any longer. They were such good friends and this seperation was all so unnecessary. When we got to Angola, I told them it was nearly time for the movie and I would drop them off so they wouldn't miss any and I'd go see my man about a new car and return soon. I cautioned them not to talk to any college boys that may be there as many of them were foreigners. That was a good idea as it put a little fear in the girls. They got some pop corn and I watched them walk down the aisle. They thought I left but I sat down in the back where I could see them. In no time, they were close together and it was like old times again quickly. When they came out, I asked them about the early part of the movie that I had missed and they hastened to take turns to tell me in detail. I never told them otherwise. We drove west on US 20 to the new Interstate 69. "There," I said, "we will try the new road." I moved the barricades and drove the car onto the highway and let one girl drive to Ashley, had her stop and even back up five feet. She had gone too far!! Then I let the other one drive to US 6, removed the barricade and got back on 6. (I guess I taught them about taking chances-- Oh-oh!) The two were good friends again and it was great to see them arm in arm their last two years of school.

(The reader must overlook the dwellings on incidents that may seem to lack importance but as they came along in the 38 years of driving and then sub driving four more, there are sure to be those that one must relate.)

In 1970 I thought it would be a good thing to teach the youngsters to share by participating in the Christmas Penny Pitch program as radio station WOWO proposed each year. The station took time to promote and collect donations to distribute to worthy needy families each year. I set a bottle up front on the little flat surface by the door handle and announced that our bus was collecting pennies. Well the first year resulted in in collecting \$7 and each year would set a new record and by 1978 we had a goal of \$100.

Millie and I would take the money to the radio station each year and turn it in and report to the kids. It seemed like a good thing, but I began to suspect our funds were growing faster than I had expected and I feared they were going overboard to excell each year and felt they might be imposing upon Mom and Dad at a time of year when the pennies were needed at home. I had reasons to feel that lunch money was going in so I dediced that would be the end of it.

The kids would ask when I'd be putting out the glass jar as early as October and I'd put 'em off. It was becoming a monster for me and I could see trouble ahead. I announced that we would do no more because I felt they were using money that was intended for other things like lunches, books, etc. and the next thing we'd know, some boy would hock his dad's spare tire or mom's washing machine and I'd be hauled into court!

Well, all heck broke loose, so I relented one more last time only. I have to admit that it was fun and fun things happened.

For some strange reason, Roger Strite took a poke at another boy on the bus. I stopped and called him down and told him when he got on the bus the next time, he would sit up front with me and the first graders. There was no next time. He was old enough to drive and did', never to board the bus again. This was in November. One morning in December he came walking to the bus with his sisters. I expected him to ride. No, he didn't but handed me a bag of pennies

One time the state highway closed US 6 from Butler to Waterloo for a considerable time. They directed the heavy truck traffic and automobiles on old 27 then north to Angola and east on 20. At that time, US 6 carried the industrial traffic and the tourist east/west traffic through our area to and from the midwest to the east coast. During the same era, the old narrow state road 27 was overloaded with trucks out of Detroit manufacturing area to the south. That was not all, for 27 was the most popular auto traffic to and from Ft. Wayne employment area. You need only make one short trip on this road at that time to see that stopping a bus out there and discharging small children was inviting real trouble of the worst kind. I was greatly apprehensive, it was so dangerous. I went to see the Sheriff, Frank Carpenter. He had his hands full already.

We made it a strict policy to never open the service door until all the traffic came to a complete stop each way. Some would slow down a bit so a child could cross then gun the vehicle to get rolling.

We were southbound one afternoon and stopped at Carl Walkers after Pat and Donna got off. We were rolling south preparing to stop at Clair and Elizabeth Walkers'. Betty was to get off there and cross the road to their house. Bobby was too small to go at that time. As I watched the traffic pattern at that moment things looked real good. Under normal heavy traffic I felt more comfortable where I had a big truck or two trailing close behind at low speed preparing to stop. I could see a loaded car carrier directly behind me. Behind him was another semi with a high box trailer and behind them I knew there were a couple cars. That's all I saw in the mirror. Now in front was another picture as traffic was fresh out of Waterloo and determined to make up lost time. The hill south of Walkers prevented us from a long range sight and north bounders could not see the bus stopping. Several cars were lined up as they honored the red lights and came to a stop. As I recall, perhaps four cars and no trucks yet.

Betty was standing at the door waiting for me to open it. My right hand was on the door handle, we had to wait for everything to get stopped. I opened the door. She stepped down one step and as she did so, I

heard a rumble sounding like thunder. I grabbed for her but she was already stepping off. I got her long braided hair and headscarf in my hand and held on. Something was hitting the bus, a flash later a semi went by our open door on our right side and the mailbox post and paperbox post where she would have stepped off was gone, wiped out! At that point, the driver turned the truck sharply, crossed the ditch, up a bank and into the field near Russell Walker's house. All this happened in three to five seconds! I still held her. I let go and Betty stepped down crossing in front of the cars to her house. The semi driver jumped out and stood there looking at us. I started up and called to him, "We're all OK, no one hurt." He was pulling a flat bed trailer with a lot of ropes securing the load. That noise was those ropes hitting the side of the bus as he passed. He paid Clair for the posts and such and paid Russell to pull the big rig back onto the road. I did not turn him in. I really didn't think it was the thing to do. He must have been running fast and was farther behind us, caught up and the other two big rigs had covered us up. He dared not hit them and he could also see the line of cars facing him and choose the burn getting by until he came by us. We had so many incidents that year. I began running the route down and back to discharge only on the right. I didn't want the kids crossing the road. The trustee couldn't pay for those miles, he said, but we did it anyhow. Later, the Sheriff and some neighbors went to him and he did pay the extra miles that year. We saw cars run into each other several times. We tried for a short time to pull off on the right so not to stop traffic. That let the kids off safely but the bus couldn't get back on the highway once we gave up the right of way. We would be to blame for whatever happened while trying to recover and get up speed. We had to remain on the traveled portion and stop all vehicles each way for 11¢ to 15¢ per mile!

As far back as I can remember, bus drivers would enjoy a good joke on each other. While driving to Ashley from 1941 thru the 1950's, a man would come to school early in the school year, meet the buses in the morning and remove the fire extinguishers for checking and refilling. When we came in at 3 p.m. they would all be

serviced and waiting for us in the furnace room.

One afternoon, Ed Wilhelm and I walked in together to get ours. There were several drivers already there visiting with George Bowers, the janitor. Among them was Elmer Dunn, a good driver and a man who did everything right. Ed picked up his extinguisher and as he did he said, "I don't know if I'd know how to use this thing if need be." "Well," Elmer said as he was holding his in one hand, "nothing to it; just like this" and he grasped the pump handle and began to pump the thing. It began to spray all over. It was the darndest stuff and smelled bad. I was nearest the door and backed out. He got nervous and couldn't shut it off. He sprayed the boilers, the ceiling, the walls and all over the floor. The darn thing kept on. He got it shut off finally and what a mess and stink it made. George had to clean up. I went in to see how much there was. Elmer was embarrassed to death. He was asked to paint buildings and to check other extinguishers. We had our fun cut out.

Roger Hess was known to all bus drivers as he had been county school superintendent many years. When he became head of transportation in 1963, there were few drivers who were not familiar with Roger. He attended the driver meetings each year when the social nite banquet was held.

I wrote several plays we used for entertainment at that time. One required a replica of a school bus on stage. We built one of cardboard, one sided only, using wheels from the garage and painted it yellow, too. We cut out a row of windows and sat chairs on the back side for "students". I think I occupied the driver seat and the other drivers were the "kids", chewing gum, throwing paper and yelling "Turn up the radio!" The "kids" needed only one practice. They went all out. It was fun. Some drivers still talk of that nite. (We built the bus in Carl Murray's garage)

Another time, I wrote a skit around the use of a lie detector. It worked out even better than I had planned. I knew of some little incidents that had happened to various drivers that were not known to Mr. Hess and very few other drivers. I got a divider curtain, poked a small hole thru it, mounted a red balloon on a square board-like plaque and

with a hole thru the little board and thru the wall of the divider. The balloon extended thru far enough for an assistant to blow it up a little as one wished to denote a lie was being told. Well, Vance Leas played the part of Roger Hess and I succeeded in selling him a lie detector to solve a few mysteries with the fleet of buses. We had drivers come in and with their backs to the "detector" answer rather pointed questions. The balloon would inflate and deflate as we wished. Well, at the end, the last driver was Lloyd Rowe. I had heard of a little mishap he had that not everyone knew. Mr. Hess (Vance) asked Lloyd if he ever used his bus for other than transporting school kids. He said, "No, of course not." The balloon goes up a bit. The questions like that went on and the balloon got larger and larger. The last question, and Vance was indeed indignant, got to his feet and said, "Didn't you use the school bus to steal a car one time in downtown Corunna?" He said, "No, I never stole a car in my life." I forget who I had blowing the balloon, but at that point, I stuck it with a hat pin I had. It was really big and of course the bang and implication of theft was all very funny. This incident stemmed from one time when Lloyd had his bus parked in Corunna along the street. When he went to start it, it rolled back a little and the high bumper of the bus passed over and caught a bumper guard on an old Volkswagon without the knowledge of Lloyd. He drove out, at least started out of town, and took the little car along behind him. He couldn't see it, of course. As the "tow" was unauthorized, I called it "car stealing." We had our fun with him.

Early at Ashley, there were problems backing the buses in to pick up in the afternoon. We tried one driver watching for the other but that wasn't always the best in bad weather. I said, "Let's try meeting up town at 3 p.m. and all drive up together in a chain and leave together. We were going to try it the following Monday. Well, Monday I was up by Fremont selling a car. A man and wife selected at color at the kitchen table. I kept looking at my watch. I was fidgety but didn't know why. Well, my watch had stopped! I ran out of their door saying I'd see them the next day and took off. I drove as fast as I dared to and came into Angola from the east on 20 then headed south and was

going well. I thought I could still make it on time. South of Pleasant Lake, the big red lights came on behind me. I never saw such a huge thing. I stopped as quickly as possible, ran back to the officer's car. I said, "I know you have a job to do. Well, do it but I can't talk to you. I've got a school bus to drive at Ashley at 3 p.m. Write up your papers and I'll be at the Lepley garage tomorrow morning and every day. You can see me there and do whatever you must do. This is our first day of a new method of parking and I'm the first on to try it. I've got to go now." I got back into my car and sped off. He was so stunned, he let me go. That nite, I told Millie what I had done and I said, "I don't know what may happen from here but he may be waiting for me in the morning with a long list of violations. Let's hunt him up tonite. He lives up around Snow Lake, I think." Then it came to me. I must be in Detroit tomorrow morning and all day. I'd not be at Ashley at all. Now I had to find him or else. We found his house up there and he was relaxing in his kitchen with his kids. I told him I had to locate him as I would be gone tomorrow and had told him I'd be there as I drove off. He said, "I'm not going to give you a ticket. I followed you into Angola from the east. I said, "I never saw you." "Well, I followed you for more than seven miles," he said. "I never passed on a yellow line or anything but I drove darn fast, I know. If word gets out that I talked you out of a ticket, if my wife tells the neighbors, we'll both be in trouble." Well," he said, "how about my giving you a warning ticket?" "That suits me. I think we are both better off that way." That's the way it went. I was so intent on being at Ashley on time that I never looked back all those miles, running at that speed, I was concentrating on the hills and curves and passing. I guess it's a good thing that the excessive speed was the only "crime" I committed but it was a close call.

In the years when I owned the chassis and the trustee exerted little restrictions on use of the body, strange things happened in the summer. Some drivers removed the bus body as did Leo Schoosler and used the truck without a cab on the farm work. Leo hauled gravel in the summer and replaced the body for school. I used mine at Christmas for

church kids to go carolling or to take on some church outing such as taking the young people to a movie in Angola. We did this every other month. It was a fun time and really gave us a family feeling. I think there are folks in our community that still remember those trips.

(One day I look back and recall one thing, then the next day I recall something else.)

One morning after a day and nite of heavy rain, I started down a gravel road with perhaps ten kids on the bus. I came down past Lester Rempis' farm. He was down there in the road with a long pole to alert me to a large cave-in of the road where the big tile crossed. It seems the broken tile had let water surge up and carry away a large section of the road. He was not well at the time, yet he walked that long lane to be sure I didn't drop into that hole.

One year we got a real blizzard on a week-end around December 1st. County road 31 was drifted shut and the bus could not get thru. Folks got out by a back way to get to town so the road from Harold Freed's farm on south must have been piled up 5 feet deep. Barbara Rempis was the only student down there but she wanted to get to school. We got thru the road from the north to Freed's then we crossed the ditch into Freed's field and went south to the line fence, located a shallow place and crossed back onto the road to continue to the Rempis house then back again. Morning and nite we crossed the field until Christmas vacation. Sometime during the vacation the road was opened. Barbara passed her exams and graduated that spring on time.

A school bus driver sees life as it really is. The first person outside of family members to meet the kids. There is an element of sincerity of life you see daily without an effort to paint or varnish over. It is a rewarding and interesting experience to see a little first grader climb aboard with all the apprehension of boarding a 747 for London, see him wave to his mother, then resign himself to the hands of strange people and a big bus taking him away from home. Up to this time, it was he and his mother wherever, to church, the grocery store or hair dresser, mother was nearby but when he climbs into the bus and it takes off, well, he may never see her again. Now he worries. Will he find the right room? Will the teacher like him? Can he find the toilet in time? Will those big kids pick on him and on and on. A little boy, perfect in dress and conduct, good looking, everything came out to the bus one morning at the Buckmasters. Assuming he was a new Buckmaster I'd never seen I said, "What's your name? What Buckmaster are you?" The answer was quick but he was slow to say each syllable and yet so emphatic and loud enough to put it across. "I AM MICHAEL J. SPURR!" I'll never forget that. It was Carol Dunn's boy boarding the bus at Buckmasters. He was NOT a Buckmaster, he was Michael J. Spurr. I recalled this incident quickly when I read his name in the paper recently.

The day finally came when we were told this was the year we could get a new truck and and the trustee would get a new body. It would be a 48 passenger one at that!

I sat down and ordered several Chevrolet school bus chassi. By 1951, Chevrolet was building a Chassis designed for this work. I ordered two exactly alike with identical options. When they came, we put them in storage nearby. Cecil Parker heard



THE POTENTIAL OF A CHILD

by Irving D. Larson

A man, who later was elected president of Brazil, was criticized by his opponents of catering to sentiment because he kissed a baby in its mother's arms. Later, when he was being interviewed by a news reporter, he said, "I'll tell you why I kiss babies. I think of an infant boy, with neither father nor mother, who was taken by a woman who gave him a home, nurtured him, gave him an education and an opportunity to accomplish something. I was that baby and that is why I always feel proud to kiss babies. Babies are the potential men and women of this country. The one that I kissed in its mother's arms may someday make an important discovery that will benefit the world, become a great humanitarian, or could possibly become a leader of his community or president of this great country."

The birth of a child brings great hopes and expectations to parents and families, but it is extremely important that we surround that child with the proper training and example and that we instill within that child a proper respect for God and His Word. We should never take this responsibility lightly, for who knows what God may have in store for that little baby, God's gift to us.

we had these bus chassis and he came to look them over. I gave him the key and told him to go up and pick out the one he wanted and we would label it #1. I would take the other and label it #2. We did just that and those two units gave good service. Cecil got rid of a 1939 he had driven for 12 years. I sold the 1935 Ford that was 16 years old. I had driven it since 1941. After ten years now, the new chassis had more power, a 4 speed transmission with 2 speed rear axle, power brakes and power steering. It was a Cadillac for sure. The 8.25 x 20 ply tires were something else. They were big, safe with deep mud/snow tread. No more big heavy dual chains. With a larger electric source the lights, radio, big clear windshield effective brakes as you touched the pedal. It was truly great and I was proud of this completely new unit. We took the chassis to Lima, Ohio where they installed a Superior body. It was well built and with convenient windows and doors color keyed upholstery it was attractive indeed.

My route was lengthened and extended the entire Franklin township. Every morning and every nite whatever the weather, we went.

Perhaps the most unusual trip with the bus came during the later years of driving. It all began unusual and finished very, very unusual. I received a message telling me to stop in at the office and pick up papers to go to Indianapolis on Saturday. I picked up the envelope and went on my way as it was nearly 3 p.m. I would look it over when I got home. For quite a number of years, I drove an evening route in addition to the morning and afternoon trips. It was not unusual for me to make Saturday trips now and then because I couldn't take trips for basketball, football and the like because of the 6 p.m. trip each nite. When I looked over the particulars of the Indy trip, I was surprised to see that the departure time was 2 p.m. and returning at 2 a.m. the next morning. I thought this was a mistake for sure. We never left for Indianapolis at 2 in the afternoon, so I went to the office only to learn it was right. I was to be at DeKalb and ready for a 2 p.m. departure. I had made many band trips to Indianapolis of one kind or another but always early morning departures. I wondered about that.

We left DeKalb at the required time with only one slight change or orders. We had two less passengers than our trip plan stated. This was a violation to begin with. I asked the instructor about it and he said that two of the girls were going to drive and follow the bus. I asked him why and he just said they told him they were driving one of their father's car and were driving by themselves.

We pulled onto I-69 and headed south. It was early in the Spring, about March 1st., I believe. It wasn't real cold, winter still was close by, but not too bad. Nothing to be concerned about. The only thing that gave me concern was those two girls driving behind the bus.

First off, I'd bet the folks didn't know they were taking that big car into Indianapolis that nite. I'd bet the one who had the OK to drive out to the school was so the parents wouldn't need to get up to pick them up at 2 a.m. and the other girl was buying the gas so, who cares? Well, they were a threat to themselves and to me and all in the bus. The more I watched them in my mirror, the more I felt there would be trouble ahead. I didn't go far before I knew they had little or no experience out on the road. They insisted on following too close. I thought perhaps they would drop back just a bit as we went along, but no, they stuck right up too close. I told the director I didn't like those girls hanging on the bumper as they and the farther we went, the more it bugged me. Sometimes they'd move in so close, my mirrors couldn't cover them. I decided as I went along, I just wouldn't have it. It was my practice to drive to State Road 28 around exit 42 and there at a Standard station, I could gas up. There were restrooms and a restaurant for snacks that the kids could avail themselves while I refueled then proceed to Indy or wherever and then on the return to refuel again and be home in two more hours. I decided I'd tell them flat out to board the bus and leave the car set at the truck stop. I told them they couldn't follow the bus in town and if they missed an exit and got lost, they would jeopardize the entire project. I scared them a bit and they parked the car and got on the bus. That was a great relief to me but the director didn't seem to care one way or the other. His mind was on the program that nite.

I didn't want the big Oldsmobile under the rear of the bus at a stop lite.

Everything went smooth at the location down in the south part of town at the oldest and first high school in the city, we were told.

It seems to me now, the program, all the competition and awards that nite ran until after 10 p.m. We came out to a rather damp, cold, raw wind but that's all. We got all our music and stuff on board and headed back north. Some kids would sleep soon and it would be a short quiet trip home. The girls would pick up their car out there on '69 and I'd tell them to leave breathing room between the car and the bus. I thought they would now because there would be no contact with those in the bus as dark as it was and with two in the car, they should stay awake so all was well now, or was it?

We arrived at State Road 28 fine, no problem. The car was there. I looked it over, gassed the bus and went in to pay the bill. The lady at the register said, "I feel sorry for you. The road north is all but impassable." I thought she was kidding me. "No," she said, "there is four or more inches of wet, heavy snow between here and the next exit. Didn't you notice there is no southbound traffic now?" I hadn't noticed that. It was near midnite and I thought little of the traffic as I'm not often out at midnite. It just never occurred to me. I talked to the girls and told them there was snow on the road; wet, greasy snow and they should stay farther back and use much caution on turning and stopping and not to bump into the bus. They were more serious now and things were not as funny as when we departed. We headed north and almost immediately we ran into snow. There was no real problem now, only reduce the speed and go straight. No traffic anywhere just me and the car behind. The temperature was right near freezing and slush was flying like mad, snow was two or three inches deep. No problem, just be cautious and go slow. This seemed to do the trick. Then the lights revealed a car stuck front end on the berm with the rear up in our lane. We got by it and so did the girls. Now I would see what to expect and shifted the bus to low range and proceeded on. Now running in low axel, I could feel more in charge but it would ad an hour to our estimated time of

arrival. Parents would be at school waiting and waiting but we'd make it OK by going slow.

As we kept moving along, more and more vehicles were in the ditch or along the berm but there were also cars abandoned on the roadway in the driving lanes. We would encounter a car with no lights. I was driving in low axel and third gear and sweating. I noticed my shirt was getting wet all down my back and sides and I hadn't been aware of it. I wondered why the cars were abandoned on the traveled portion of the road. I soon found out. We encountered more and more wind. I thought that could help. It would get colder perhaps and that would be in our favor. It didn't get colder but it was increasing the snowing now as we came north. All at once the bus engine stopped dead; just stopped right in the road. We were dead in the water! (snow) I couldn't galk, just sat a minute or so thinking. It was quiet now, no jokes or conversation. Then it came to me. The temperature, the dampness, the wind, snow and all the moisture we had, caused the carburetor to freeze and shut off the engine. The air being down in the carb was freezing with the gasoline vapor and were were dead! Maybe in a few minutes the engine would be warm enough to warm the carb and get us going. I got out and covered the grille and radiator to cut off the wind and conserve heat and thought that perhaps I could start it again and keep the engine hot enough to head off the freeze-up again. The engine restarted and we proceeded ever so slowly. I thought we were two miles from an exit and I'd get off there and be safe at least, but then what? I learned I had left home after dinner with no flashlight. I was sick! We limped along as we neared the exit, the bus faltered again and on the ramp it stopped dead again. There we sat. The Oldsmobile was right behind. I thought it would start again after setting there a bit but that's no way to pull out. If we got off, we might stay there. While the engine sat idle, I raised the hood on the right side and felt for the heat tube that comes from the exhaust pipe. I pulled it loose and stretched it out some by the use of the head lites, then put it back on but couldn't fasten it in the dark. I bent the flexible hose directing the exhaust heat right on the carburetor intake. If it started again, I'd think that it could raise the

air temperature a bit at low speed. It started. We pulled up to the station and had the girls leave the car set. They were ready to do so, no matter what. Dad and Mom could get it later. I worked on the pipe a bit more and decided to pull out again. We did not see a car or truck now, either way.

We were alone on the road. I could only guess where the edge was. We had both lanes to drive in but the abandoned vehicles were here and there in the driving lanes. It was eerie; like it might be after an atom bomb attack. I don't know where the people were. This storm north must have been several hours earlier for everyone was gone. My fear was of bumping into an empty auto or slipping off the pavement as we went around one. I drove slow in second gear only, low range which was less than farm tractor speed. It had quit snowing but it was so deep that it was difficult to maneuver the bus around the newly formed obstacle course. The bus was never so quiet. The band director sat there helping me watch for completely covered cars in our path. That was the only sound now as the kids were either asleep or holding hands or praying. We all knew the seriousness of our situation. I considered calling the Auburn police and having them notify the parents we were all OK but we just kept on moving north.

The first thing we noted was that the abandoned cars were getting easier to see. It had not snowed as much near the Huntington area and a car was stalled only every now and then. The worst was behind us. I began to feel a little better but still feared I could slip off the road as it was slippery as grease.

When we turned off I-69 on to road 8 at Auburn, a cheer came up from all of us. I joined in on that one that nite. There were cars sitting at the school waiting all nite for us. They had no way of calling us or learning where we were, but we were home.

After unloading, I proceeded toward home, so thankful, ever so thankful, glad to see road 6 and headed for the Auburn Ashley road. The faithful old bus had brought us all back and I was so glad to turn at the corner and head up to the house. I knew I needed enough speed to climb Sherwood's (now Blech's) hill but not too much as I would be going down the other side and didn't want to lose control there. I got up the hill OK and

was glad for the big mud/snow tires. They sure came in handy with the empty bus because it was slippery. I knew I must stay directly in the center of the road as it was crowned with snow and I had to keep straddled the crown in the center; if it got to one side or the other, I'd be walking home for it was just that slippery. I started down the descending side of the hill good enough and proceeded over the two small rolling little knobs and was approaching Smith's on my right with the gravel pit entrance on my left. The bridge came into view and I'd be turning in the driveway in a minute or two. I noticed the bus was a bit to the right of the center. I pulled the wheel to the left a little to compensate but it did not respond. I turned a little more and a little more with no response at all. It was as if the steering was disconnected from the front end. Now I could see the bus was going to go into the ditch on the right. It did. It wasn't that deep but the bus tipped quite a lot. I was in the ditch in front of Smith's house with no way to recover. If I turned right, the bus would cross the lawn and plunge head long into the creek. I knew even at 15 to 20 mph I could in no way get stopped. I whirled the wheel completely to the left and considered locking the brakes. Maybe the mud/snow tires could grip in the ditch and reduce the results of the impending disaster but I decided it would do no good. I was headed directly for the guard rail on the right side with the ditch getting deeper and deeper. I knew I was going to take the guard rail head on, go half the length of the bus and plunge head long into the creek below.

(I am so nervous now as I recall this and find it almost untrue to write. It's hard to write these next thirty seconds or so)

I just knew life as I knew it was over for me. I thought of many things; of how ironic it was to come all this way all nite long with so many close calls and now to get killed across the road from my house. I don't know how one can think of all the things as I did because the bridge rail was rapidly approaching and it seemed as though I was sitting still. I can't seem to clearly recall what happened but I remember hearing a noise like a rumble or thunder. I thought it came from the heavily cramped front wheels plowing out the ditch. The bus was leaning

now and the guard rail about to impact the bus. I do not remember the bus coming up and out of the ditch. I do not recall correcting the steering wheel after it climbed out. The first thing I can recall is sitting in front of our driveway and putting the gear lever into reverse to back into our drive as I had done many times before. I backed in slowly for I wasn't sure if I was doing it. I backed up under the yard light as usual. I shut off the lights and the engine and sat there. I thought perhaps I was under the bus in the creek unconscious or dead and my brain was doing re-runs or something. I thought, "Well, I don't feel anything. I'll follow this to the end." I thought that it was interesting. I felt good but something here was happening that *surely is impossible!* I never heard the crash, I never heard glass break or the sound of the guard rail being mangled, I never heard a sound.....nothing! The bus was angled properly to back in and so I thought as long as this condition seems real, I'll do as I've done before. I put the lever in reverse to see what would happen. Any moment now, I expected to hear an explosion; the front of the bus to go up in the air, torn apart, then head down to the bottom of the creek with one last great compression. We had a great abundance of rain several days before and I knew the creek was running high and when the bus would dive into the creek bed, the impact would likely crush me up front and if not entirely, the water would seal up quickly and that would all be over almost instantly. As I backed in along side of the pole light, I thought "perhaps it's the cold water and the wreck was so bad that I felt no pain" -- but my brain does all this in a moment.

I parked the bus, got out and stood looking at the house. It all seemed the same. I walked around the bus to look for marks or scrapes but couldn't see a thing. I felt along the right side as were the light was dim and couldn't feel a thing. Now I was beginning to think "somehow I'm here, I'm home and all is past and I'm OK, the bus is OK and something *unreal* has happened."

I gave up and went into the house and went to bed. I was exhausted. It was late, like 3 or 4 a.m., as I recall. I fell asleep and that was it.

I didn't get out and take a walk the next morning early but I did go down to the

creek the first thing. I couldn't find a thing. Some folks had gone to work with those four-wheel units and threw slush all over the road and ditch. I couldn't get a clue. It had never occurred to me last nite after I parked the bus, to walk down there, maybe 600 feet from the house, and take a look around. I examined the bus closely the next day. The body, tires, wheels, didn't reveal one bit of evidence of anything that would point to such an experience. It was a couple of days before I returned to my normal self. It was just more all the way around and I found it hard to understand how several things happened. First thing off, anyone who has driven a school bus these recent years, knows how much steel is overhead and how top-heavy they are. When they tip beyond a certain degree, it's next to impossible to recover. The weight transfers to the right as it enters the ditch, you loose grip on the left side and have no control on the right. It's not like a car. Once it's there, it will stay there, even in good conditions and this had been so extremely slippery.

I'll always remember the great rumble as the front wheels were cleaning the ditch for it was cranked as far to the left as it would go and yet it made no effort to climb out and the guard rail was coming right into the bus almost dead center. That's the last I knew. As I looked over the bridge the next morning and walked up to the guard rail from the south, as I had approached it last nite, I could not see any way I could have climbed out. The ditch was getting deeper and deeper as I approached the guard rail. Had it become more shallow, it would have given a clue, but it was the other way. I also well knew this fact; if it climbed out just before it hit the rail, I could never have spun that wheel back quick enough to avoid the guard rail on the other side of the road. I would have slammed into it with a lot of force. The bus weighed 14,000 pounds empty and I doubt if the rail on the other side would have withstood a direct impact!

I have pondered this experience for many years and I often recall it all. I came to the conclusion now, as then, that there was a "Force" of intervention that took place there that nite that is beyond my comprehension. I believe it so.

I am sure that my mother was disappointed with me from time to time. While I took an active part in the church work which she enjoyed, I was never as deeply involved or committed as she would have liked. I did, however by her example and others, too, develop certain convictions of my own of which I could see proof and knew they existed with certain predictable results.

One was, I *knew* that there was a Creator that designed all this, the universe alone, the systematic order of all the planets had a master intricate design to serve all these years down thru the ages, yet always on time.

The animal life, living breathing, existing in many forms of reproduction so delicate and also so predictable had to be the result of a Master.

The earth, its composition, its balance and proportion of vegetation and animal needs so provided could only be by the hand of a Master Creator.

The creation of man himself, with all the long, long list of special gifts to draw from, to get things, to do things, to make things to enjoy and supply his needs, truly the body of mankind is a miracle of tremendous proportions and cause for one to pause and marvel, yet there is great mystery.

I believe man is born for a purpose and programmed with a plan, yet he may choose not to follow it. Choices are ours and often we may choose to go another way, but its best to follow it. I do not feel that the life plan is fixed and carved in stone. We are created with the art of choice and to a great degree, that control, that privilege is ours, special to us, not to animal life. We have so very much control of our own destiny.

After World War II, I used to hear frequently men say that they did this or that and it just wasn't my time. It was that simple. Well, I don't accept all that. If that were true, I could stretch a cable from the barn to the house and walk across saying, "If it's 'my time', I'll fall. If not, I'll walk across." No, we have the ability to make judgments and choices; a great gift with grave responsibilities.

I think that we frequently make mistakes in our judgments and get in trouble. Sometimes we are forced to work our way

out and it can be costly in many ways, yet other times, God steps in by a mysterious means and will make a correction to benefit us.

I am convinced the bus incident was the result of God's supernatural intervention. I would guess each person could relate similar evidence, but this was the most convincing I ever knew. I relate it because it was a major experience and for a fleeting moment, I "knew" I was going to experience sudden death. How could so many thoughts race thru one's mind so quickly? It's all electrical, I know, but I thought, "Well, I always wanted to die suddenly and not be ill and incapacitated, so here it is!"

We bid every four years and now and then someone would bid against you on a route but the proven driver had preference if all else was equal, his past experience and equipment were to be considered also.

To have driven a school bus over the period of time I was given would see great changes. I drove 38 years for myself then did some substitute driving for several years. It was thru a period of change I had attended school at Ashley 11 years, drove the bus there another 38 years so I was at that school each day with very few exceptions for nearly half a century.

One of the great experiences that I would remember was directly a benefit of school bus driving. I would come to know Clark Kelley through the Latham garage in Waterloo. Those who knew him slightly would be certain he was rough and tough, course and unpolished. He was very convincing in displaying that image. He felt in his role as auto mechanic he had to be that way and set that as his goal. When you were around him, you learned he was a very sensitive, caring man. In his work, no one that I ever met, understood a Ford V8 engine as he did. The sound and feel told him all about it. He had no sophisticated electronic equipment to depend on. He just understood the thing like he had made it. At home, where he was Clark Kelley, he was a warm, close, loving man in every sense. He did not like to overhaul those engines but he would if forced to do so, but his favorite thing was to take the wrecker and tow in a sick one and in two hours turn out a smooth running, quiet, responsive V8 surging with ready power.

He had loyal customers from all over because of his ability and humor. He applied his uncanny ability to diagnose engine difficulty serving rich or poor and each got a very generous dose of humor. His humor was appreciated by many, if not all, but I'm not sure Mr. Latham was as appreciative as some, however. Among his faithfuls were truck drivers who always wanted their truck fixed first and have it take no longer than ten minutes.

At that period, during World War II, there was a company in Michigan that operated a fleet of very unusual trucks. They were built by Ford for one purpose only; to transport airplanes over the highways. As other plants were producing war goods of all kinds, the Ford plant at Willowrun turned out bombers. I think they were the B24s. Another plant produced a particular truck designed to haul them from the plant to the destination for shipment over seas or assembly in the states. The unit was of a semi-tractor trailer design with the trailer being exceptionally big both in height and width. It was very long by current standards and considerably larger than any trailer on the road. Two of these would run together and we were told the two carried a complete bomber. They were black and gray and you recognized them from a distance. They ran day and nite, seven days a week. Now to pull this trailer, they built this unique truck. It had a wide cab with tandem drive wheels, a broad, high radiator and hood assembly that enclosed two Ford V8 engines nestled side by side inside the engine compartment. I think the first ones on the road were assembled with two 85 hp Fords. Later, they installed two Mercury 100 hp V8s. I never got to examine them. They watched them like a hawk but they were truly a work of art. These two engines operated individually and that made it possible to run at reduced speed on the highway with one engine only. Each V8 was powered into a rear axle and drove only that axle making it a complete drive unit. Now those men soon learned all along their route who could repair them and who couldn't. Clark could and did. They would come from the north loaded and from the south empty, but come they did. Clark learned the drivers and called them by their first names. When they were at his mercy, he would tease them

so much. They were always in a hurry either way. If loaded, they "just had to be in Atlanta by morning" or if returning for a load, they "were already four hours behind and had to get going."

I talked to some drivers on a few occasions. They told me they would limp clear to Waterloo from Detroit on one engine or on a sick pair of 'em just to get to the Waterloo station and then run all the way back with an empty to get it fixed right. Clark would send them out happy. They might show up morning, noon or nite. I wish I had a tape recording of their conversations. I could sell 'em, I know. If I happened in with bus problems, I sometimes had to wait on the bomber truck to leave. In 1941 I purchased a 1940 Ford V8 tudor. It was truly a great car and we were proud of it. It had 13,000 miles on it. We drove it way past the 100,000 mark driving those war years. I never overhauled it but it, too, had some engine work so between the Ford bus and car I came by the garage from time to time. It was a natural thing to hunt Clark down when you needed help and I told him so. He liked to tease and would say, "Yes, I know. You came to complain. You never come to see me unless your back's to the wall, right? You don't care about me. You just want to get going." He had more fun that way with folks. He was good hearted and would help anyone but he had to tease 'em.

I was out in the cornfield husking corn from the shocks on Paul Ankney's farm one time. I heard a terrific noise, like thunder, and over the hill came a car and what a car. It was Walt Latham's 12 cylinder Lincoln Zephyr crossing the rough corn stubble at 20 to 30 mph raising all kinds of dirt and dust. He stopped in, he said, to take me a ride in a "real-for-sure-car!" I should have never gotten in. I knew that but couldn't refuse after Clark drove all they out to the farm and back across the fields. We came by the house. Millie was hanging clothes on the line and I told her good-bye. I didn't know what I was doing or where I was going. From the little gravel road at 70 mph, we turned onto the blacktop and were up to 100 mph in no time. Clark said he was tuning up Late's car, just road checking. He stopped with some disappointment saying this car should run 110 easily. He made some adjustments,

One time the bus was faltering and I took it to Clark and said I didn't know what was ailing it. He said, "It's the loose nut behind the wheel! I'm going to the bathroom if you don't care, then I want you to take me a ride." I get in the bus and waited. Here he came. "Drive it up the road," he said. I did. We got to the Hamilton road turn off. "Pull out here", he said. Now he handed me a wrench and said, "Make yourself useful. Take out these four plugs. Can you do that? Now remember, take out all four, no more." I did. On the other side he did. He reached in his pants pockets and took out four new plugs for me. "See if these will fill up those holes you got over there." In five minutes or less, the truck ran well and we were on our way.

He always would run down the Chevrolet engine; claimed the valves had to be ground every time the weather changed. He declared the Ford engine never had to have this done in a lifetime. I came into the garage on Christmas vacation and all I could see was Clark's rear end, head down in an engine of this new Ford bus. "What are ya" doing, Clark?" "What does it look like?" "Looks like you're grinding the valves, but I know you aren't. You told me you never do that to a Ford. What are you doing?" "I'm grinding the valves." "Clark, this is the second time you've done that to this bus." "No it isn't." "Yes it is." "Nope." "Yes it is. I was in here Thanksgiving and you had the heads off and were grinding the valves. This is the second time." "No it isn't. It's the **third** time!" (It was) "Why?" I asked. He came up out of the hole and walked to the entrance door of the bus, reached in and grabbed the gear shift lever and said, "Do you know what this is?" He was shaking the bus and I thought he would break it off. "It's a gear shifter." "I wish you would tell that fella over there. See that shot gun over there? When he drives out this door and goes around to cross the tracks there, I'm gonna run out the front door and shoot him right there in the seat if he doesn't use it!"

He was so tender and caring with his wife, who was blind. He never reflected upon her inability or limited life. He was so good to her and their children; a tender father and good provider.

He ran for Sheriff and if I and a couple others would have helped as we should have, he would have gotten the job. It was a close election but was given to another. I always regretted I didn't take a little time to campaign for him. He would have been one of the great ones in the community.

Clark was witty, very witty and I was in no way close to holding even in an exchange of wits. I would defend myself the best I could but I always lost.

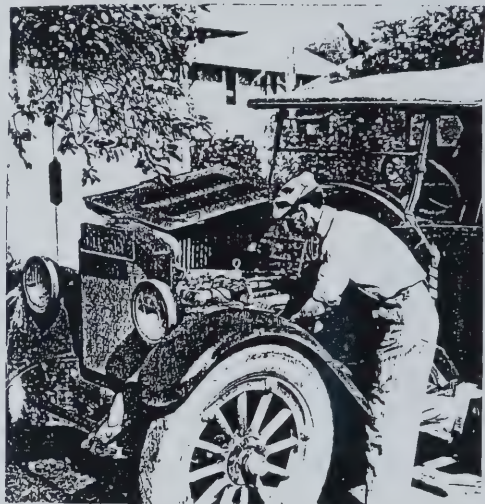
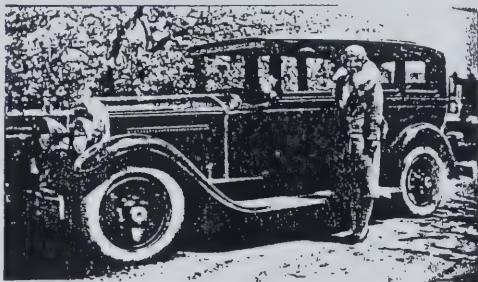
Mr. Latham, the owner of the garage, died and for a time Clark kept the doors open and did what he could to keep all things going; some mechanic work, the telephone, the new cars, run the wrecker. He was alone now. One day Grant Kelly, owner of the local telephone station, drove by in his car. Cyril, his wife, was along and Grant saw Clark standing in the doorway leaning against the door frame at the front by the big drive-in overhead door. Grant said, "Clark, is that all you have to do now that Late's gone?" Clark answered quickly saying, "I'll have you to know he calls up here every nite to see how we are doing. He called last nite." "What did he say, Clark?" "He said to change his money into silver and send it down to him!"

Clark died suddenly of Cancer believed to be the result of a bad bruise from a wheel rim under inflation.

While at the funeral home, I was talking to his wife. Although blind, she could see only light and dark. I told her that I appreciated Clark and would never forget the many experience I had with him. She said, "I'm glad I never let a day go by without telling someone how great I thought he was." I'll never forget that moment. Hubert and I were standing beside the casket and she stood there as if she could see but she could not and never would, yet she was strong indeed. She had made a statement I had never heard before or may never hear again, expressing her appreciation for her husband.

It will be a scene I hope to remember all my life. As I stood there looking at an empty body, the remains of a man I had learned to enjoy, the spark of life gone. It was that spark she could see. I could not. The part I saw was much less, much less. It was a strange feeling to me as we stood each recalling what we could see, what we would remember of this life. Later, it came to me.

dropped the hood and away we went. It did the 110 mph easily until we came over a hill and saw Clyde Reese backing his old GMC truck in front of us. Clark got the Zepher stopped from 110. How, I don't know. He mentioned some uncomplimentary things about Mr. Reese and his eyesight in particular.



We were with the Freeds and Lowes and were enjoying jokes and fun. Something strange began happening. Now and then there was a light mist or rain drops falling on us all afternoon. There wasn't a cloud in the sky. It was sunny and warm. We were trying to figure out the mystery when we caught preacher Bob with a water pistol shooting up behind us.

~~~~~

When Lavon Forrest married Evertt Penick, they were gone for a short time. When they returned, it was noon and there were ten or twelve around the kitchen table eating. I was between Glenn and Clark as they walked in. Lavon, a beautiful girl, burst in smiles and all with a "Hello" to all. Earl stood up at the end of the table and said, "Hello, Mrs. P.P.P.P.P Nick." Everyone laughed.

~~~~~

A couple of boys of our community attended the fair. They took one of these rod-stiff dog leashes with a molded doggie harness. As they walked their invisible doggie that day, it attracted the attention of both strangers and friends. As they paused for exchanging comments describing the dog, folks would stare at the empty harness but as they would depart some folks would discover they had a wet pant leg. One boy carried a squirt gun and aimed it strategically while the onlookers were distracted by the invisible dog. It was quite amusing to observe the whole thing!

~~~~~

When Uncle Austin was small and tagging along with the older kids one nite, they decided to steal some watermelon from a nearby farm. There would be some danger here and they discussed it at great length. During the activity, the owner appeared suddenly. Everyone ran for their life. Auncle Austin was way behind. A shot rang out and Uncle Austin fell to the road and cried, "I'm shot!" He actually hadn't been but they had to pick him up, he was so frightened.

~~~~~

Along with other park residents, we were flying back from Aucupulco after a few

days of recreation. The plane was delayed in Mexico City while they repaired a damaged tire. Jokes were on the exchange when Pat Harrison said, "Well, one thing now. Jim learned to say 'thank you' in Spanish. Now I wish he would learn to do so in English."

~~~~~

In 1960, there was some concern that some local roads would be cut off to build I-69 near our church. A traffic counter cable was laid across the gravel road east of the church. Edith Wilhelm was janitor at that time and made frequent trips across this counter to and from the church. She was observed more than once pausing at the cable and spending time to go forward and reverse again and again in her effort to show substantial traffic use so that a bridge might be built over I-69. All of her efforts, however, failed.

~~~~~

Viola Forrest returned home one day to find all the light bulbs removed from the sockets and piled on the kitchen table. She was sure that this was done during a visit by her brother, Don. She wrapped one arm with a great amount of bandages, called one of her sisters to report she had broken her arm from falling on the stairs in the dark, got in bed and waited. She received company. Don returned from South Bend. Everyone was so sorry for her. At the appropriate time, she got up, removed the bandages and had a party.

~~~~~

We kids bought a nice new pipe for Pop for his birthday. The very first thing, he removed the stem and stuck in a longer ugly elderberry stem. "Why, Dad?" He said, "I'm trying to get away from smoking."

~~~~~

The Forrests raised onions. There were fifteen or more of us weeding by hand, on our knees in the hot muck on a hot day. The Forrest kids were faster and way ahead. I was behind. Roy King was behind me. Myrtle was supervising us. Upon inspection of Roy's row I heard her say, "Roy, look here. There are so many weeds in your

What I saw was the fragil, the uncertain, the less important; the color of hair, the broken fingernails, calloused hands. She could see love, devotion, caring, a companion, a great man with a giving heart.....and *she* was blind?

SMILES (in no particular order)

At the height of panic at a local house fire, Charley McGrew, then the Fire Chief, was ascending a ladder with an ax and bar to open the roof. Alva Duncan came up below him and with hose in hand with the pressure on, and all coming up Charlie's pants and coat nearly blowing him off the ladder hanging on and yelling for dear life before the incident was corrected.

Forrest Miller, a successful farmer and extremely hard worker, often irritated his wife, Eva, by working long hours in the barn with little time for anything else. A salesman called one day. "Where is Forrest?" he asked. Eva replied shortly, "He's at the barn in the hog house I suppose." Then added, (Fuzzy was small) "He'll be the one with a hat on."

Guy Lepley and Worthy Crowl were fishing friends. One time Guy was unable to go along. Worthy went to great detail to tell the details of the fishing trip; how many fish there were, how big they were, what kind they were and where they were caught and on what bait. There was no comment or interruption from Guy for a full fifteen minutes or more. Finally Worthy ran down and there still was no comment from Guy. Worthy said, "What do you think of that, Guy?" Guy, with hands over his mouth said, "Worthy, there have been but two people on earth I could believe about their stories and that was you and me. Now I have my doubts about you."

I can't recall the names of the bride and groom in the community that prepared to cut and eat the cake before the church full of guests but they went to great effort to cut it.

They finally used a saw and pushed only to find that the cake was a substitute hard rock!

Miss Taylor, an English teacher, conducted a quiet, dignified class time. One time she was writting on the board with her back to the class. Bob Carpenter was sitting with Ralph Parsell and picked up Ralph's books and threw them out the open window. We were on the second floor! Ralph got to his long, lanky 6 foot frame and without permission, walked out. Miss Taylor glared at him when he returned, books in hand with no explanation. There was no discipline but not over 15 minutes later, arm around Bob, Miss Taylor gave a scoot and Bob was sitting on the floor in the aisle like a little kid, sides split!

Mr. Fredrick passed our history room one day. The teacher had stepped out and he saw Russell Kuckuck leaning way back in his chair. Fred stepped in, lifted him completely from the chair, shook him like a dust mop, socked him down all disheveled. On the way upstairs I said, "Russ, how about your bout with Fred. What can you say?" Like Glenn Tompson, he said slowly, "It---was---a---thrill!"

Ray Sunday and Glenn Forrest were in a Stroh restaurant after a day of ice fishing. A man near Glenn returned from the restroom without zipping up. He was a business man, a stranger and was wearing a nice suit. Glenn leaned over and informed him. He was embarrassed and excused himself and went back to zip up. Returning, he thanked Glenn sincerely. Glenn said, dryly, "Seems to me that would be worth a quarter." Poor fellow, caught off guard, got up and went thru his pockets. As Glenn waited intently, the stranger found a quarter and Glenn took it, put it in his pocket and then went back to his meal. Ray, of course, could hardly swallow his food. Glenn was sober.

One time during his ministry at Cedar Lake, the preacher, Bob Neuhard, visited out campsite one Sunday afternoon at Long Lake.

about age 3, was helping Mom iron clothes. She was working on an apron and Mom noticed she didn't get to the apron strings. She brought that to her attention. Beth looked her in the eye and said, "I read in the 'pay-po', you don't have to iron apron strings."

~~~~~

Uncle Marion took Hubert and me along to Ft. Wayne to get an old model T car. He hooked it to his model T truck and started home by going thru Ft. Wayne. At a stop light, he took a running start and broke the chain. I had no brakes and coasted out in the center of the intersection. Hubert, his co-pilot, saw the situation and tried to get him to stop. He did at the next light, backed up the full block against traffic, hooked up again and went on. We stopped north of Ft. Wayne. A lady was hanging out clothes. He asked her where her toilet was. She pointed and stood there where she was 'til we left. He went around Deetz's corner so fast to make the hill. I slid across the gravel road into the ditch. He never stopped or looked back.

~~~~~

Charley Wilcox, of Ashley, was ditching across the road from our house for Forrest Miller. I walked over to see him. "How are you, Charley?" "I'm mad." "What's the matter? Seeme to me you've got a lot done this morning." "That's just the trouble. I took this job by the hour and it's so darn cold I have to work harder to keep warm. Makes me mad!"

~~~~~

The Forrest girls were enroute to Ft. Wayne and stopped along the road north of town where they saw a man working nearby. I don't know which one, Irene or Dorthy, asked him, "Are we on this side or the other side of Ft. Wayne?" "Lady," he said, "you're on this side." She thanked him. He said, "You're welcome." They went on.

~~~~~

When David's house caught fire in Helmer, the Ashley fire department rushed to give assistance. They got the pumper truck set quickly and Alva Duncan took the lid off the cistern, dropped in the big hose, gave the signal and before they knew it, the *septic*

tank was cleaned. A slight error of about 20 feet made for some humorous conversation for a time, believe me!

~~~~~

One morning I met Jim Harrison, a park resident. He was walking over to the office. I said, "I just heard Harper Brown will be here by noon tomorrow. (he was another resident) Jim said, "Is that so? 'Spose we got time to get up a petition to keep him out?" Those two were always teasing each other in good fun, but if you didn't know it, it sounded serious.

~~~~~

While hunting sparrows one nite in our barn, we were done there and about to leave, Clark Forrest said we should go on down to the barn floor. He would remain up in the hay mow. Don was to hold the flash lite and he was going to jump. We all got ready to watch. He jumped. Don turned out the light. It was pitch dark. Clark hit the floor like an explosion. Don flipped on the light. Clark was all bruised up and was so mad at Don.

~~~~~

Forrest Miller's dad was a hard worker and resented Uncle Charley Tompson who lived next door and made a living with much less sweat and toil. As Mr. Miller came by with a team pulling the old binder, Uncle Charley walked out to pass the time of day. He held up his hand and said to Miller, "What is that ya' got there?" Mr. Miller, in no mood to josh, said, "I'd be ashamed. A man as old as you are and been to the penitentiary and don't know what that is. It's a binder. Giddyapp." Seems Uncle Charley had stolen a gold watch when very young and Mr. Miller reminded him of that fact!

~~~~~

Jim Harrison attended a State Camper Rally. During the amature contest, he appeared in a long white coat and surgeons cap pushing a wheel chair. He had an old toilet bowl on the chair, a roll of toilet paper on one side, a little wash bowl and rag, a towel on one arm and a sign that read "Curb Service." He walked slowly and never smiled and was so serious stopping at various sophisticated men and women and asked them

row." He answered, "Oh, they really do grow so fast." Myrtle had to laugh too.

~~~~~

Viola Casselman and Walter Lazier were married and Floyd Martin, a neighbor, planned to greatly embarrass them by hauling them around town in a hog crate. We were all at Casselmans. I felt sorry for them and when they asked to retire to the bedroom for warm clothes, it was granted. They escaped by a window and disappeared as the crowd waited. I was glad. Floyd was mad. He never caught them.

~~~~~

When Millie and I were married, Wayne Kester, a neighbor boy was quite small. He spent much time with us as we were some younger than his parents and new in the area. He developed a constant Donald Duck speeck with his tongue in the roof of his mouth. It may have been fun for a while, but let me tell you, all day, every day was a bit much and it wore thin but kept coming.

~~~~~

Brown Albright traded his model T open touring car for a new sedan with wind up glass windows. Right after church, he hurried to his new car and took a big chew of tobacco. Mom had hold of my hand. As we started home, we paused to speak to him on the drivers side. Mom said something. Brown wanted to respond but had to relieve some tobacco juice. He turned and spit to the right of the car. The glass was up and was so clean. He forgot this glass business would require some getting accustomed to. What a mess that was!

~~~~~

Pop, Jay Mead and I went to Cedar Lake fishing. Dad was irritated because Jay would bait up and fish while we unloaded and got the boat ready. He was fishing from the back of the boat when we cast off. Dad was rowing and I pushed off and got in front. Dad said, "Sit down, Jay. You'll fall out." "Oh no I won't." The boat struck a post and he went out like a big frog down into the mess of lily pads. When he came up he had lily pads all over him. His hat was floating away. I was scared. Dad was mad. Jay grabbed the side

of the boat trying to get his breath, coughing, he hung on the side. Dad kicked his hands with his heavy shoes and said, "Don't get in here that way, You'll upset the boat. Go around to the back where you got out." He finally crawled in and sat wet all morning in the back seat. I don't think he ever went along again.

~~~~~

Uncle Austin would set up camp at crooked Lake on some of the longer visits. One of his methods was with a sat line. He would stretch it between trees as cottages were few and there it would dry and he would make "dough balls" to bait the many, many hooks. He would tell me to stay away. Of course, I had to see how close I could walk beside the row of hooks. One went through my ear. I yelled and called for help. They came and unhooked me. It hurt. When it was all over, Uncle Austin laughed saying that was the biggest catch that line ever had and perhaps the largest at Crooked Lake!

~~~~~

My dad and Uncle Carey would go fishing when they were home visiting. Uncle Carey was wearing a patch over one eye and under his glasses. Dad whipped his line, threw out the hook with fresh bait and right soon Uncle Carey yelled, "You took my glasses!" "What?" "You got my glasses." Dad looked around and sure enough, they were gone. Uncle carey said, "Pull up." Dad pulled up the 18 foot fish pole and sure enough, out on the end of that line were the glasses, patch and all!

~~~~~

The Ladies Aid met at our house one time in the afternoon. Mom let us ride Barney. He had life when loose but was a slowpoke when at work. There were three of us on. I was driving because it was our horse. Like a travel agent, we were touring the farm yard and around the house. We were riding along beside the clothesline when all at once that horse turned and walked under the line. Well, it drew up tight first then scraped us all three off into a pile.

~~~~~

From time to time, we kids would amuse Mom with our little antics. Beth, at

I think I have said that there are those who live more each year than others in six and that's true. Glenn Forrest was one of those. In fact, the entire Forrest family belonged in that group. As a result, we were constant beneficiaries. The Forrest family held regular get-togethers. Now these were not the usual "sit around in chairs and talk about the weather" sort. These were times of competition and in all means of activity. There was no sandbagging to be "nice" and let someone else win. No, a newcomer was a good target; the younger was always fair game; whoever was involved had a goal to win and it made a great event. Croquet especially made for keen competition.

One time an argument broke out between the boys concerning who could do what to the other. This occurred as they were planting corn! They quit, shut down the operation in the middle of the afternoon and went to the house, set up the croquet set and settled the disagreement then and there, went back to planting corn and planted 'til dark.

When Glenn was quite young, he was strong and was always ready to challenge Clark, his older brother. Because he was smaller and younger, at any competition he would receive the cheers and encouragement. On the basketball floor they were both well above average but Glenn excelled Clark in maneuverability. When Clark and Glenn would wrestle, Glenn was the favorite. While Glenn was nearest my age, but one year older, and I liked him the most, I always felt sorry for Clark in these incidents.

One time, Clark and I were playing checkers. He was the only kid there that day and he and I were in the parlor near the stove locked in a close game. He would get one, then I would do the same. It was quite even. Someone came over to watch and they began to offer me advice when it became my turn. It went on for some little time. Pop joined the group and it was his favorite game. He began to lend his expertise to me also. All at once Clark stopped his efforts and said, "I didn't come up here to play the whole family!" His statement cleared the room of all spectators.

Thanksgiving was always a big thing for the Forrests and Glenn told me this time they were all going hunting. There would be

twelve or more relation as husbands and friends were invited. Don often brought friends from South Bend. A day or two after, I saw Glenn and asked him about the hunting trip. He said they didn't get much. "Well," I said, "you sure must have got something as many as there were. What did you get?" "I got one mouse, two moths and a heck of a big hole in my hat." "How did you get the hole in your hat? You must have ducked. Good thing you weren't taller." He said, "No, Don threw it up in the air and shot a hole thru it. I think a couple more shot too, but only got one hole."

FUNNIES - 1 liners

Carl Miller attended all funerals everywhere. He made Mom smile when she asked, "Do you want to go with us this afternoon to the funeral?" He said, "Yes. Whose is it?"

Wayne Kestor's driving us nuts with his Donald Duck talk - every question, every answer, every day!

Dean Paulen, who helped us weed onions, always said for everything, "That's highly unpredictable."

Leo Schlosser's expression-"Gee-na-nee-krauts!"

Very Wise's expression- "Crackey-diner"

Earl Farrington would start a sentence, go half way with explanation, stop and say, "You know, you know."

Bob Veal, in exasperation when a serious event caught up with him - "Now wouldn't that eat your lunch?"

Dad saying, "Sock-erty-ma-gusha????"

if they had a need to use his service. The program nearly broke up. Of all the performers, he got first prize.

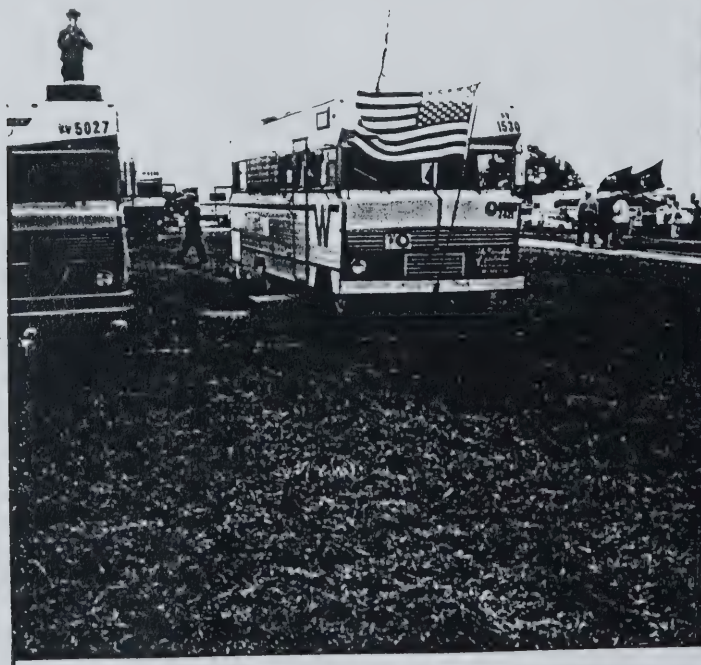


SEP 68

The new "Winnie". This was the 2nd motorhome in DeKalb Co. that we knew of.

Note 2 Toy Poodles

hs



Our new 1978 Champion at a Good Sam Rally

#1530 ourMotor home. Note two toy poodles in front of #5027

with them. We thought we'd better keep going but it would have been so interesting, I think. Anyhow we escaped!

We were included in a walking tour of an old cave in Hannibal, Missouri. The guide was explaining how Tom and Becky got lost down in there. He was a tall, thin man with a true southern drawl. He introduced us to his dog who he said was a good watch dog. He said he wouldn't enter the cave without his dog. There were about 25 tourists like ourselves walking along the main corridors of the cave as he explained about the formations and how the kids got deeper and deeper into trouble. I liked the cave all right, but there was too much "Tom and Becky" to suit me so I dropped back and brought up the caboose. The big old hound dog didn't look like a watch dog to me. I did see him wandering around through the group smelling and checking out little side tunnels that were not lit. Once when the guide was up ahead, the dog was back in a darker side room way behind near me. I wanted to see how much of a "watch dog" he was so I picked up a small stone and threw it back into the dark space with some vigor. The big hound came bounding out and worked his way up to his master and remained by his side the rest of the trip. Yes, he was a watch dog; he *watched* his master. When that little stone hit the wall back there, he was ready to leave. I had a good laugh over that and told Millie of it later.

We had little occasion to stay in resort areas as many do, but having won trips here or there did give us some opportunities. The three of us spent one week at a Dude Ranch near Gaylord, Michigan. Barb enjoyed the experiences of water sports, skiing, horse back riding and the accommodations were good. There was great entertainment every evening all done by college people that enjoyed their work.

We spent a week at the famous Greenbrier complex. The White Sulphur Springs were a huge white mansion, a southern white house for a president. I recall the most beautiful lawns and gardens surrounding this.

A stay at French Lick in southern Indiana was not so beautiful but was interesting. Just the story of the history here alone was something. It was a great attraction at one time.

We drove out to Atlantic City years ago and had such a great time. There was only one disappointment. We located a nice motel by the water. It was beautiful and we went sightseeing. When we returned that evening, we hardly recognized the place. There was no water, all mud. The tide would come and go. What a thing, but the beauty of the Board Walk, Steel Pier, the children's programs were the best ever. I'll bet Barb never forgets the children's shows or the horse diving from a tower into the ocean every hour. It was a great place in those days. Parents came with their children and had a great time. No fear, no gambling, no drugs, just families, like ourselves, enjoying a trip.

THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

During the two terms as township trustee, it was the duty each year to deliver all books, papers, records, receipts and business information to the Auditor's office at a prescribed date for state auditing. As always, I was in a hurry. I carried an armful of material to the office on the second floor and deposited them on the counter. With some obvious gasps of breath, I said, "Here they are. Go to it!" Marjorie Carr said, "Gene! You better slow down. You're out of breath." I was ashamed. A middle aged man in a necktie and coat acting like one of the kids but I kept thinking about what she said. That nite I looked in the mirror and weighed myself. I didn't like what I saw in the mirror or on the scale; 196 pounds on the same frame I used in high school. I decided that nite I'd be more conscious of this and work it all back to where it was more manageable. I decided to add some exercise for one thing, as I knew I was *sitting at* the desk, *sitting in* the bus, *sitting on* the tractor and just *sitting* in general. I began by getting up a bit earlier and walking up to the Shoemaker road and back rapidly. It went well, so I walked up the blacktop road farther and farther each morning 'til I got to the gravel road a mile north, then decided to go west and make it around the square mile. I had to hurry to make it in the one hour I'd allotted. Three miles of the walk was in the dark, on gravel and stones and was not good for the ankles.

TRIP FUNNIES and OTHER STORIES
OF INTEREST
(some afterthoughts)

We had just entered Halifax, Nova Scotia, and were looking for a place to set the travel trailer. As we drove along the bay watching for camper signs, we saw one in a front lawn. The lady seemed glad to see us and we were glad to see her. It was such a beautiful spot looking out on the bay at all the boat activity while we unhooked our 15 1/2 foot 1965 Yellowstone trailer. The sailboats were running in a circle. I asked our lady what they were doing. She told me it was a sport that the kids did on evenings and week ends. Only two people occupied a sailboat, often it was a boy and a girl. The chain of boats would go out nearly a half mile then the leader begins making a large circle. They all follow. He then makes the circle smaller and smaller. This requires rapid work on deck to face the wind, side to the wind, back to the wind and etc. Each round, the circle gets smaller as the crew moves about frantically. Some don't make it each turn and most drop out until the next time. It was so picture perfect and the fun to watch.

The next day we were driving around the city. There were such unusual homes and lawns. We drove up to the Citadel in the center of town to watch the changing of the guard, all on horse back with great trim and pomp. As we were sitting there, a few minutes early, Millie jumped out and announced she was going to hurry to the restroom. I sat there in the car and she hurried all right; **right into the men's room!** I saw her and laughed as she bounded out quickly.

Now we were even as I had done the same darn thing at Yellowstone. We were staying in the Old Faithful Lodge up on third floor. We were sitting on a balcony-like structure enjoying it all when I decided to go to the men's room. It was just a short way down a hall. The first door I came to said "Ladies". I went to the second one and entered. It looked different to me. There were no urinals only stalls. Women were talking everywhere. I made a quick U-turn. You should have seen the look on the two women I met on my way out. I will never

forget their expression to my dying day. (I guess there were **two** doors to that restroom)

Driving eastbound on the Trans-Canada Highway in the Revelstoke area, we were returning from a northwest trip. Max and Shirley Lowe and their daughter Becky were with us in the Winnebago motor home. As we rounded a curve, there was a small herd of goats in the road. We stopped to watch as a couple of on-coming cars did also. One man leaped from his car, glued his eye to his camera and began filming. We watched as a big goat walked up behind him, attached its teeth into the tail of his red, red shirt and as the man lunged away, startled so, the goat gave a yank also and tore the shirt from bottom to top right in front of us. He looked up at us his face red with embarrassment. He didn't know what to do. He took off his torn shirt and threw it at the goat that already had some red threads entering his mouth. Oh, it was so funny!

We were just driving around a lake near Syracuse, New York toward evening time and we saw what looked like a small black cloud going directly to a house and disappearing in a big brick chimney. It was an old house, large and a bit tattered. I stopped as we neared and then we saw that it was a flock of birds going in. There was a steady flow from the flock. As I approached Millie in the car, I was near the house and I heard a man yell, "What are you doing over there?" I turned to see a big heavy man coming toward me mad as heck. I said, "Hello." He said, "I'm tired of you trespassing, all the time. I'm fed up with it. Every time I turn around, someone is prowling around here." "We saw those birds by the thousand going down that chimney and I was going to take a picture." He got closer and said, "I guess you don't know who I am. I was the Sheriff here for sixteen years and I don't put up with the trespassing anymore." I stood and listened to his speech, not really worried. I had done nothing wrong; I knew that and he knew that too. He went on but his speech was less caustic. I thought he must need some attention. He probably had little since his job as sheriff. I asked him about his work as sheriff and such. He became quite friendly and called his wife out to meet us. They then asked if we would stay a while and eat supper

When we moved to the Auburn-Ashley road, the blacktop road was much nicer to exercise on.

By becoming conscious of my weight, I learned to eat less on a day to day basis and drank more water. My weight gradually came down to a normal level. As it lowered, I decided to cut the four mile trip to two miles and add some vigorous calisthenics before the two mile jaunt. After some stretching and such, I would take off down to road 6 and east to the Interstate and beyond to make a mile or more on a good slow run non-stop. I felt good and settled into this regularly, seldom missing. I decided the short trip, now must not be skipped because of weather or any excuse, so I bundled up and booted if needed and went daily, almost no matter what. Semis would go by and throw slush on me. The rain was no problem unless it was a downpour. I was determined to go.

The winter weather was mild one time and I was going at a good clip, southbound going up the hill at Bob Blech's. It was almost pitch black and I thought I was in the middle of the road. All at once I saw a solid black wall in front of me. I couldn't stop and threw up my hands just in time to slam into the side of a horse. A black horse was standing crosswise just waiting for me to do that! With hair in my mouth and my heart beating a mile a minute, I felt around his neck. There was no halter, so I led him by the neck up to Blechs. There was enough lite from the yard lite to see. I found a garden hose and tied it around his neck then tied him to the fuel tank.

I settled down and went on my way. When I returned my pass by the house, I could see he was still there. I came by later with the bus at seven o'clock and he was still standing there by the fuel tank, garden hose hanging around his neck waiting for Bob or someone to take care of him. It was funny afterwards but it was a real surprise to run into him. That big horse would have presented less of a barrier had he been standing to face me rather than crosswise. Then again, he could have been headed south and I might have overtaken him or worse yet, ran into the north end of a horse going south!

In the spring, daylite came earlier and it was safe to ride the bike, I'd ride west every other day. I found I could ride to

Cobbs, on route 6, and back in one hour. Then I could make it to Corunna and later I'd ride to Bill Stonebraker's house on 327 and back. I could often tell if I were a bit early or late by the traffic. One gets to see and meet the same car at the same place each day as many workers leave on the minute. Folks of Ashley would honk or wave or call out each morning. It was easy and a pleasant way to begin the day. It was so different than on the gravel roads near the other house. This became no effort at all. Sometime a car would stop and quickly share news of the day and all in all I looked forward to the experience and my weight and breathing improved.

I think my experience with Dr. Krum at Angola was my real motivation. He was quite old and cross and I got a sure feeling he didn't like me. He was doing a health exam for the school for communicable diseases and a fitness certificate. As he asked 20 or more questions of health history, I repeatedly said "no" to the list of questions. Epilepsy? - no. Diabetes? - no. No, no, no all the way. I did volunteer the information that the first day of school I missed was when I was in the seventh grade because my sister was thought to have Scarlet Fever. He took x-rays and said, "Sit down young man. I think you have something to tell me." (he meant it, I could tell) "I don't know what", I said. "You know very well." "No, I don't know very well. Tell me." In exasperation he grabbed up my x-ray pictures, rammed them into his light display and pointed to the lung and chest areas saying, "Just that. Tell me about that." I stared at them a moment, then it came to me. I said, "I know now." He said, "I thought so. Yes, I thought so." I related that was one reason I got out of the oprhan's home hospital. It is written on my paper. I had tuberculosis and the lady got me out with no charge by accepting all responsibility of care, doctors and perhaps burial fees. I remember now." He said, "You hear me now, young man. You'll reckon with that one day. You will. Remember that." I did. I do and I made up my mind, "We'll see about that!" I began to give more thought to care of myself and to make him out a liar.

HUMAN INTEREST

One day, the postmaster from Angola came in to have his car serviced. Don Osborne was a regular faithful customer depending upon us for all car service and replacement of new cars. His wife, Peggy, was employed by the local gas company. They were the finest of people and good customers. While his car was being serviced, he told me the Federal Inspectors were at his post office building in Angola watching for someone stealing money and doing away with selected mail. He told me there was a second story to the place so they might observe employees at work and witness the theft. He knew little for they say nothing until the person is apprehended. They followed one of his employees out after work and as he drove home, they followed him. They stopped him and searched the car and found some mail that didn't belong to him. They searched his house also. It seems some women were sending cash in envelopes to order hose and lingerie from a local factory that shipped direct. Envelopes with amounts of money were slipped under the counter and into his clothing. Well, Don said, watch the papers. It will be a small, probably unnoticed article, you'll have to look for it. I did and sure enough, it was there two or three lines was all. It said "so and so was apprehended for postal stealing and committed to Federal prison on Wednesday." THAT WAS ALL IT SAID!

Those postal inspectors are tough. They do no guessing. They are patient, wait, and catch one in the act and off you go before a judge, no trial or lying to a jury.

Don was a pleasant nice person to be around but he had a bad habit. He smoked cigarettes a lot. He developed a cough the doctor could not contain and was sent to the University Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan where he underwent surgery to remove a lung and a bit of the other. They gave him little hope of living long. When he came home, he was confined to his home for a considerable length of time. When he was able, he came to the garage to see us and get out of the house. Peg brought the car down and he could only ride along. We got a chair for him to sit in the service department to watch the boys work on cars. Cars were his

enjoyment. When someone would enter smoking a cigarette, he would call them to him. I saw him get up from the chair with considerable effort and plead with them to stop smoking instantly and would tell them what he had seen while in the hospital and what had happened to him. He did get so he could walk a bit but went down hill to a premature death. He was big, strong, and healthy appearing, too, but the silent killer soon won the battle. We need oxygen to survive and we have a wonderful, complex exchange system of delicate tissue that separates the waste gasses from the oxygen that can't work properly after prolonged abuse.

Don was the one who showed me three packages of old coins hidden in the air ducts of his house. He would buy a hundred dollars worth of change at the office, sort thru it in the evening and replace the coins chosen, then with the \$100 restored, trade it for a fresh batch. This way he accumulated and enjoyed the activity.

At the time of the construction of the Fremont Bank branch in Ashley, everyone was pleased. The need was great in that area. Millie made regular trips to the Angola Bank with great sums of money. At times, much of it was cash. Everyone in town knew what she did. The money was placed in a pouch and she had a routine and there was never any hint of trouble. She was readily recognized by the bank personnel and had built considerable respect for her bookkeeping ability.

The bank set a day for dedication and somehow the town choose me to speak for the Ashley area. I stood along side of a lady from Fremont who had influenced the entire project and now the bank branch was a reality. While we were waiting for time to start, a crowd gathered and she and I were talking. In the conversation, I told her we expected to purchase a bicycle for our granddaughter at that time. She went to some length to tell me the inventory of the hardware in Fremont. It was a pleasant conversation and I expressed my personal appreciation for the investment and effort to bring a bank to the community and the business it might attract. It was but a few days after this that she and her husband were found in their basement bound, gagged and murdered. The murderers then

What 'cha will. That house leans way off and I'll build no bricks to that house, Vern, that's all. Never did that and I'll not do it now."

Now I knew Jay Bunge from years of delivering his Sunday paper. He paid promptly and was strong in his convictions. I just knew he meant every word he said. I also knew my father-in-law. He and Jay were old friends from way back so I did the only reasonable thing to do. I got out of there. I went back to the shop to work. There was nothing I could do. I thought, "Of all things, how could this happen?" Millie was sick and I had begun this project with \$3,200, all we had from the farm sale and borrowed a great sum from the Waterloo bank. When I told the bank president, Earl Leas, what I was about to do and would need to borrow some money, he said little but felt I should have a deed to one acre of land where I would be setting the house. "How much?" he asked. "Perhaps \$2000 to \$3000 may be needed," I said. "I could pay \$100 per month." "All right," he said. Here we were ready to move in, the house done, the furnace in, but we just needed a chimney and needed it right now. I had carried out more than \$7000 that I owed the bank at \$100 per month plus interest and had no chimney. Well, Vern and some liquid refreshments kept Jay there for a couple of hours. They would look at the house first one side, then another. Come back to Vern's garage for more refreshments, then return. It was near lunch time and I walked over to find Jay softening a bit and feeling sorry for me. I think, but I don't know for sure what Vern had told him and I don't care. Jay decided to try it eventhough he was cussing all the while.

Well, he told me to dig a good sized hole on the outside down along the wall. Boy, I grabbed a shovel and went to work. He unloaded his tools! Now he told me what he would do. He never built a leaning chimney and would not now. "I want you to cut into the house three inches right up through the siding and shingles and phase out half way up to a mid point. There the chimney will be flush with the side of the wall. From there on, I'll fill in with mortar the rest of the height and the chimney will be straight. The house can go to hell." It's funny now, but it wasn't then. I was always indebted to Vern for his being able to convince Jay. Before he

laid the last brick, we began moving in. It was a close call. I whittled away on the loan for about eight years or so paying \$100 per month never missing a payment 'til Christmas of the last year. With six payments to go, I needed some money for Christmas. I asked Earl about missing a payment. "Sure," he said. "You'll just finish in July instead of June, that's all." We lived there for seventeen years. It was good to us. It was a super place to raise our daughter. Farm life in general was the best place for a family. She could drive a tractor as straight as any man; had pets and animals there, and a creek nearby in the early days. She and Vern would go fishing up on Lake George. They hit it off well and it was a great learning experience for a girl. I recall them returning from quite a distance. Pa forgot the bait! They had fun together. She got a kick out of his logic and view of things and he got a big charge from her young, fresh wit. I know we could have had a better income and nicer conditions, but for Barb, it was tops. It paid off for life, for what you learn in those early years, sets a pattern that controls your future when it comes to the surface.

While working, Harold Smith came by returning from the sawmill and unloaded a pile of cherry from a big tree he had cut up. "No charge," he said. I just want to have part of this house." We made trim, base boards and stairway from the wild cherry tree he dumped off. He cut it, hauled it, paid the saw mill and gave us a generous amount!

Rollie Alleshouse and Bert put in the septic tank. They gave us, what turned out to be a welcomed bit of misinformation. They said we would have to remove the lid every five to seven years to clean it out. We lived there for seventeen years and never did. The last I knew, it never had been and that's been over forty-three years.

We got so that we didn't notice the windows and doors being straight up and down and the walls slanting until we would try to paper the walls. Millie would come near to cussing after selecting a figured paper, then there was trouble. The answer was simple -- plain paper and paint!

After we moved into the house at Vern & Gerties in 1946, I had much work to do. I attempted to remove a large stump from the front yard. I dug it out by hand and

took their keys and robbed the Fremont bank. This was a shock to the Fremont community and the crime was never solved.

1946 In The Old House

The summer of 1946 was difficult for us. Millie spent most of the time in a wheel chair. Her back was at the end of the line. Betty Badman worked for us Monday to Friday. She went home week ends and I tried to farm, housekeep and nothing went well. I agreed to purchase half of Vern's welding shop. We needed a house. Pop sold me the tenant house for \$250 so we sold our farm machinery. I only had one piece that was valuable; the new tractor. I debated on how to sell it. Some were combining companion items with a late model and sold it to the highest bidder and it was tempting. We sure needed the money then, but I decided to sell at the O.P.A. book price and go by the rules. A man had his family members each put their names in the hat. We drew one name. The buyer paid me and loaded the tractor, took it to Avilla and sold it for \$2000 more that day! O.P.A. citing prices were not enforced and I was very frustrated.

The day came to move the tenant house to Vern's and the big truck pulled it right along. As we approached the old bridge at Frank Miller's, I went ahead and removed the railings as it passed. I remained behind to reinstall the railings and instructed a helper to be sure and ride the roof as they went under Frank Miller's electric wires. He didn't but merely lifted the wires up and laid them on the roof. The truck pulled the house forward, the wires caught and pulled them out of Miller's house. It cost \$8 for REMC to come out and hook them back up.

Furl Schmidt said he would dig the basement for the entire area of the house as I wanted for \$75. He did so with a little Ford tractor and small scraper on a three point hitch. As he finished at the proper depth, he encountered a huge stone. It stuck in the ground and would have interfered with the cement floor. I got Conway Rempis to help me square the walls and prepare to cement. I wanted to dig out the stone; he wanted to use dynamite. He said he worked with dynamite when he was in the service and he could blow the rock clear out of the basement and lay it

on the lawn to the north. I gave in reluctantly, indeed. He did just as he said. That big stone went almost straight up and came down on the north side of the yard. We drug it over to the creek. He did just as he said he could. It was unbelievable to me.

We sat the house on the cement wall and it fit. (that was a relief!) Two men took on the job of rebuilding the old house and add three rooms on the east side. We added a large living room, a small den and a bath. Andy Love and Rube Carper began by removing the lath and plaster and internals all over the house. They did not think of squaring up the walls or adding proper support before they began to put up the new walls. The house had leaned north at the top by several inches and they finished it that way. You can imagine the trouble we had installing doors, windows and wall paper; there was no end to it. They never checked that house. It leans to the north to this very day. Where supports were removed, it went like an egg crate. We never forgot that carelessness.

The failure of those two carpenters never ceased to make trouble for us living there, but the really worst and most serious came in October.

The house was all done and we needed only the chimney built. Vern had a commitment from Jay Bunge of Waterloo to build it but he couldn't get him to come and do it. We became desperate. It was time to move now, the furnace was set and all ready yet we could have no heat 'til we got the chimney up. Vern did all he could and promise after promise finally came to be. One morning Jay drove in. He drove an old Dodge car/truck work unit pulling a trailer full of tools and ladders. I saw him drive in and went out to meet him as he got out of his car. I was glad but it lasted only for a minute. He took one look at the house as I pointed to the spot he began to swear and in a serious manner he declared, "Those bastards ought to be shot!" I didn't know what to think. He said, "I'll not build no chimney to that house. Never." I got scared and ran to the shop and got Vern. They were buddies. Vern tried to kid him out of his determination but he would not budge. "I won't do it, Vern. That house is crooked and I won't build to it. I never did in all my life and I'm not beginning now. Say

where the entries were many and varied along with the banking responsibilities and this was a blow. The IRS envelopes were designed to draw attention by anyone who would handle the mail. She was concerned with what the mailman must think about our getting letters from the tax service. Finally in desperation, she gave up and said, "Let's send them the \$311. I can't live this way any longer." So we did and thought maybe we did or did not owe more but at least it was over-but not yet! A week later, another letter came. This time they thanked us for the check. It satisfied the account and included a printed affidavit to be signed by me stating that we had made an error and acknowledge we owed that amount. I refused to sign that statement and wrote a short note, myself, telling them to go ahead and cash the check and clear the account but I would never sign that statement until we were told the reason we owed. Well, we found ourselves arriving to the tax office on time meeting with a rather nice man who was looking over our file; tax returns and letters. He had the whole thing in front of him. He didn't say a word, just kept going thru the papers, reading here and there. I wanted to jump in and blow the whole thing to pieces. It was too quiet, but I kept a grip on my common sense that told me to sit still and be quiet. It seemed like an hour but I guess it really wasn't. He cleared his throat and said, "Well, I don't see much to do here. You owed this amount and sent a check for that amount and I have nothing more to do except have you sign this statement and send you on home. I said, "We are determined to know where the error is that accounts for \$311 more. I will not sign 'til we are told. I won't do it. I think we have the right to know. That's the way I feel." He stalled and read and stalled more and more, then I knew something was coming and I began to gain confidence that we were on the right track. After a while he said, in a haltering, sheepish way, "Now here is your income of \$----- and here is your deduction for donations. We know this deduction is wrong." "Which one is wrong?" I said. Now we were getting someplace. He said, "Your church donations list for the year \$800. That is not realistic!" I said, "I get paid \$100 per week at the garage where I work. They pay in cash. I put \$10 in the collection each week.

There are 52 weeks in a year making it \$520 and I put \$1 in the Sunday School class collection each week and Millie puts in the same in Sunday School. We give to all special collections as well as twice per year for the building fund and the total far exceeds \$800." I went on, "My wife sends money to several orphan homes. I don't know how many, but I have mailed the letters, I don't care about that. I came from one and they are needed where ever they are but whether you believe that \$800 amount or not, it's true and the actual amount would be even more." Well he questioned us but seemed little surprised and said, "I do believe you, but the ratio is far, far from the normal and we couldn't accept it as so. Now you get me proof of your \$10 per week and I'll clear this up." "How can I do that? I get paid in cash and pay in cash." "I'll help you," he said. He wrote a statement and said, "Copy this in your hand writing and have the church secretary or treasurer sign it and I will be at your house next Wednesday evening. I think we owe you that courtesy." I copied the statement: "It is my belief that Gene Reinoehl gives \$10 each week to our church collection." I knew Wayne Wilhelm knew I made that a practice as I'd give to him often when we'd be going on a trip or visiting somewhere else. I'd pay in advance or sometimes through the week. Wayne signed it and we went on home to wait 'til Wednesday. Wednesday evening came and the tax man came, walked in and said, "This will take only a minute. I have reviewed this whole thing. If you will give me a check for \$7, I'll give you this check back for \$311." We traded checks then and there. He said that Millie had exceeded the allowance for her doctoring and mileage in particular. She was making frequent trips to the chiropractor in Kendallville. We were relieved and happy to bring such a thing to conclusion. If I had signed the affidavit, it would have stood next year and the next.

Well Sunday, when we went to church, guess what? Three different people came to us (one was Kings) to say that Wednesday afternoon a tax man had been to their house to ask them questions about the practice of Gene and Mildred Reinoehl's giving to the church!

took the tractor to drag it near the edge of the creek bank. When I tried to roll it over the bank I did a little injury to the rear end and hemorrhoids appeared. I went to Souder Hospital for minor surgery and remained there a few days.

It was during this hospital stay that I was awakened one nite to hear an on-going voice exchange between a man and woman. It mounted to indicate a real fight at the lobby entrance. I leaned over to see. There was Jerry Tuttle, a little short stick of dynamite nurse all alone confronting a big man, obviously drunk, who had been beaten up. His face was bloody. He looked a mess, was swearing and ready to fight as she refused him a bed. She stood her ground. "Call your doctor," she said. He wouldn't. He was trying to get past her. She stood up to him and I was sure he would smack her. I got out of bed to help or at least tell someone what was happening. She ordered him out and got away with it. I expected her to be killed. She wasn't afraid of drunks!

Haley Overman was a teacher at McKinney Harrison school. After her teaching hours, she came to Souder's to do volunteer work 'til about 9 p.m. When she finished her work and prepared to go home, she would come by my room, which was on the ground floor near the front door, and would get me fresh water and any little thing I might need. Haley was there each nite to visit and fluff up the pillow etc. I enjoyed her visit. She told me and who came in or left each day.

Later, I traded cars with her delivering her a new Pontiac Grandville coupe. She held to extremely high fashion dress and conduct standards.

I was shocked to return from vacation to learn she had a stroke and was in the hospital. It seems that no one had seen her for several days so they entered her apartment. She laid on the floor unconscious. She had gotten ready to go to church Sunday morning and suffered a terrific stroke lying full length on the floor. Folks entered the apartment on Tuesday evening and she was in her Sunday clothes, church literature nearby told the story. I drove down to Auburn. She lay in Souder's unable to speak or move or acknowledge. It was so sad. She laid there so still, white and lifeless; so unlike before.

She had so much life and zest to live. She never regained consciousness. Had she received help sooner it may have been different. They said she couldn't hear or know or realize anything but as I talked to her, I felt her eyes indicate she recognized me or my voice. One can only hope.

TAX TIME

Not that the year matters, but it seems like it was in the early '60's and we were busy as always. Millie was doing the bookkeeping at Ashley from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. I was driving the bus into work then running the evening route and returning home to either farm or run back to Ashley; just normal busy times when it all began.

We were shocked to receive a letter from the IRS, the State Income Division telling us we owed them an additional \$311. Well, this was a simple beginning to a real boxing match. One of the bad things was a threat to Millie's book work, as she always kept the records and did our taxes. They had never been questioned before. She had completed bookkeeping training at Tri-State College, took the job at Plenary Gratz Elevator in Waterloo and was now holding down a complicated set of book work at Lepley's for a number of years without question. She had received a number of recognitions from Chevrolet for accuracy and the men who did Lepley's taxes found her records for what they required, to be dependable and ready on time. Now there was a serious question upon her abilities and she took it hard.

Secondly, those letters are worded to get your attention, and believe me, it effects your ability to rest and is the constant topic of conversation. Millie went over our copies of all tax entries and could discover no error, so she wrote a letter asking for some explanation of this action. She wrote two or more times asking for an explanation and received none. In the meantime, she became really worked up over this whole thing for several reasons, not the least being the fact that she received top grades in college, her job at the elevator, until her boyfriend contracted cancer where upon she quit to help care for him, and now she had been keeping the books for Lepley's for a number of years

A MEAN TRUNK!

When Charley Schweitzer traded in his 1964 Pontiac coupe for a new model, which he often did, I mentioned it to Barbara and Vince. They were in need of good transportation as Barbara was teaching and had the baby and all.

They bought the '64 trade-in; a black Bonneville coup. It had a straight 8 cylinder engine, adequate accessories and was very well cared for, clean as new. They were bound to enjoy and appreciate this car.

They lived in Harlan at that time having moved in from the country. The house they purchased, at the outskirts of town, had a swimming pool and extras to accomodate their young family. On the east end of the house was a one-car garage, a good place for the newly purchased Bonneville. This car was the "top-of-the-line" at that time. It had a longer wheelbase and made for good riding and stability. The design was smooth and good looking as the trunk lid and hood were near the same length, making for an unusually large trunk.

We went down to see them one day and I asked Barb how she got along with the car. She was enthusiastic about the car, but one thing she didn't like was the trunk lid. It either flew up with great vigor when released from inside, or it was too heavy, I can't now remember which. At any rate, I said there were ways to change that spring tension so it will more nearly balance the weight. It was a long lid of considerable weight. I said, "While you and your mom talk, I'll go out and work on that. I think I can change it." I had no tools as I should have, only a pair of pliers that Barb had in her kitchen. I opened the trunk, got in and was lying on my back using the pliers to unhook the spring. I was going to replace it to their advantage. One twist and down came the lid; bang! and latched solid. Believe me, it was heavy. Now take my word, it gets dark and quiet in those trunks. I've been where it is dark. Mammoth Cave in Kentucky gets dark, but inside that trunk was thick, black, dark! I tried to release it with the pliers with no luck and decided to see if I could remove the spare tire and work my way through to the rear seat. I worked and worked. No luck.

Now the living room was in the middle of the house with a kitchen at the end near the garage. A couple of times I thought I heard a noise but yelling did no good so I continued to work in total darkness. By now, I knew my way around in this dark, quiet, little turning area.

Barbara came to the kitchen once and came out to the garage to see how I was getting along. Thanks to God! "Dad? Where are you?" That was great! I pounded on the lid with my fist. She opened the lid. "Dad, are you in there? What happened? How did you do that?" -- dumb questions, of course. Boy, it was nice to get out. Such things help you appreciate other things. We have a good God!

TEXAS INTRODUCTION

During the summer of 1951, Wayne and Opal Bowman asked us to join them in a trip to Harlingen, Texas to visit relatives. It was a great trip with so much to see and learn about. We will always be in their debt for this introduction to an otherwise "unknown" country.

Wayne, having retired before I did, was living in a mobile home on the property of a relative, Carl Bowman, in Harlingen. He enjoyed the weather, the sub-tropical winter and the agriculture as practiced along the Rio Grande River. Wayne would call frequently and insist that we join them for a retirement period and check it out.

Millie and I made a trip or two down to Texas to look this over. One trip, we brought Walt and Martha Greenwood along for a short stay.

In 1979 we secured our 1975 little Nova 4 door sedan behind the 25 foot Champion motor home and headed down to spend the first year.

We accepted a roadside campsite at the east corner of the R.V. camping area. We were here at this mobile home park, Dixieland Manor, by name. At that time, it consisted of about 60 mobile homes and a dozen R.V.s. We were across the road from a lovely southern homesetead and citrus grove. The morning sunrise and evening sunsets were a thing to behold. The moon was so bright and the stars seemed so close right up there like a thousand feet high. I asked Wayne why this was. He

said it was because of the clean air; no factories. No nothing here to put anything into the air. The southeast wind comes in off the gulf with some moist air, like spring at home, and there is no pollution. It is yet a thing I enjoy as I practice early morning walks or biking in the dark. The moon and stars seem so close to the earth.

TEXAS INCIDENTS

As of this writing we have enjoyed ten years of retirement in south Texas. It is our practice to come down to this "magic valley" area the first of October and remain 'til after the first of May.

We have taken some small vacation trips away from our winter home at times to Mexico and our regular trip back to our Indiana home to spend Christmas with Barbara and Vince's family and visiting the many friends of our home church area.

One couldn't live ten years in such a change of lifestyle without encountering incidents of adjustment. I'll set forth some of those:

One of the early experiences was the life and death of Frank Ferrie.

This was a man who at one time owned a considerable amount of land in Montana. He decided there was a great need along the Rio Grande River to help the needy. He sold his land and came to Harlingen, Texas and purchased land north of town.

He began, on a small scale, to collect any items, new or used, and transport them across the river, going door to door giving to needy families. This job was almost a twenty-four hour per day effort. The scope of need there was beyond all measurable dimension and he gave his all, day and nite. He would make regular-morning calls to bakeries for free bread and any baked items. He collected pasteboard, a much desired item, to line the inside of shacks to seal out wind; broken glass, mirrors especially, as many of the people had never seen themselves. Glass went into otherwise solid walls for light etc. He purchased tons of bread at 5¢ per loaf and older clothing items; the list would be longer than this page. He worked from daylight 'til dark for the task to which he was devoted. He received financial help later and acquired several trucks and vans. When he crossed

the river, he was an angel of mercy and became known far and wide as the "BORDER ANGEL". There was another title given him by the friendly folks south of the border - "The Gringo Messiah," for he was just that. He denied himself of everything nonessential. He ate from his "day old" collection and gave his land to local Mexican people who he felt were deserving. On 7th street, an area north of town, still are small homes occupied by many of his benefactors. He gave it all away keeping only a place to sleep. The many awards and medals he received were sold or melted down to turn them into money to aid the effort.

When we came down here, he was nearing the end of his career. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. He was a tall hulk of a weather-beaten man who took no pride in all the letters and awards.

We drove up to his little shack at the time of his death. I had been there several times and knew his housekeeper, a faithful Mexican lady called Guadalupe. She knew my car came out to meet us. His body laid in a wooden box in the porch area. It was just a narrow boarded space. I walked past it into the dimly lit room. There was his bed. It looked like a low table. He slept on pasteboard for a mattress. I could write pages of this experience and lose the reader, I guess. I will comment on the funeral proceedings as they were different, very different.

Guadalupe told me to come early to the funeral. I gathered up a load of people and we drove to the Casa de Amistad. (house of friendship)

There were a few white folks; those who were there were city officials and dignitaries of sorts who had great respect for this man. The greater percentage of people were Mexican folks, both young and old; entire families, a full width of their culture. There were several big buses that came from Mexico. I'd guess there were three or four bringing 150 to 175 people. They never sat down. They hurried up the center or from the side to the casket displayed in front of us. They kept walking around the body and back again.

When it was time for the funeral to begin, it made no difference. They continued to encircle the casket and talk some also. The

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I learned we were in a different country the first morning after arrival. A front tire on the motor home was flat. A large nail was sticking in the side. We were parked on the site and were OK but I wanted it repaired in case we had to move. I removed the wheel and as I loaded it into the trunk of the Car, Wayne said, "You want to plan on leaving it wherever you take. They will do it whenever they are ready."

I drove to the Texaco station. There were three men there; one washing the cement driveway, one at the desk and one leaning on the door. I asked them if they repaired truck tires. "Yes." I asked them if they would repair this one for me. "Yes" again. I proceeded to unload it. No one grabbed it to start the repair so I guessed it wouldn't be top priority so I said, "Can I get this after lunch, say 1 p.m.?" "Yes" again. Still no activity so I left, drove away thinking. I returned at one o'clock and it was all done and done well and only \$4 for the entire job! I learned right there not to push or hurry -- THERE IS NO NEED FOR THAT. ANOTHER DAY IS ANOTHER DAY!

BIKING

I decided the best way to see this town was with a bicycle. I went to a garage sale and bought a nearly new Schwinn bike for \$100. It had 74 miles on the speedometer. I rode it 1,000 miles that first winter and before we went home, it fell over on the cement and broke the speedometer never to run again. It still shows 1,000 miles ten years later.

I rode North, South, East and West. I could ride to the 76 Truck Stop on the north side and back in an hour flat. A favorite was an eight mile ride circling around the center and south part of town. This trip took me past the local newspaper - Valley Morning Star. I stopped in one day and asked if the editor would like a "letter to the editor"? The man at the desk said, "Yes, indeed." He gave me a pencil and paper and then got called away and told me to "just toss it on my desk when you're done." I wrote but little. In essence I said that "I heard people talk of the citrus, the produce here in the valley, the flowers and smooth highways and so on but

the nicest thing in this valley is the people. They are so courteous, so patient, so very friendly and that's the nicest thing." We saw it printed in the paper and received phone calls and expressions of gratitude as a result. That first impression remains true today as you will note should you care to read on.

To ride a bike down these country roads, stopping to talk to a man trimming shrubs or a woman watering flowers was the greatest way to learn of the area. I would have to refuse fruit, flowers and little gifts for lack of room to transport it. After returning with a couple grapefruit or oranges or flower bulbs people would give anything they had to give. I saw my mother every day. She wore different clothes, spoke broken English, was shorter and darker, but it was her, I know. They were interested in stories of snow and of our schools. I was interested in hurricanes and flowers. It was great! In parting, I always heard the same thing. "Bring your wife and come back to see us again." They are a warm sharing people.

NOT GETTING OLD

You tell me that I'm getting old;

I tell you that's not so.

The "house" I live in is worn out,

And that, of course, I know.

It's been in use a long, long while;

It's weathered many a gale,

I'm really not surprised you think

It is getting somewhat frail.

The color's changing on the roof;

The windows getting dim,

The walls a bit transparent

And looking rather thin.

The foundation's not so steady

As once it used to be.

My "house" is getting shaky,

But my "house" isn't me.

My few short years can't make me old;

I feel I'm in my youth.

Eternity lies just ahead,

A life of joy and truth.

I'm going to live forever there;

Life will go on — It's grand.

You tell me I am getting old?

You just don't understand.

The dweller in my little "house"

Is young and bright and gay,

Just starting on a life to last

Throughout eternal day.

You only see the outside,

Which is all that most folks see.

You tell me that I am getting old?

You've mixed my "house" with me.

preacher, "Smokey" Boyle, found it hard to deliver the sermon. We found it hard to hear. Of course, those south of the border understood little or none of that which was said.

Smokey read a letter from President Reagan and some other people and related his dedication to help folks. I drove a group out to his gravesite now and then. He asked to be buried beside the road where he lived, as he lived; no adornment, but a monument now stands there to mark the site of a truly great man. Books have been written of his life.

ΩΩΩΩΩ

A good way to meet folks and learn of them was with the bike. I passed a house from time to time that had an unusual amount of flowers. I stopped in and talked to a gracious lady, 55'ish. She introduced me to the many varieties of flowers. When company came, I walked to the back yard. It was covered with little starting plants, some only an inch high. As I returned, her company was leaving with several choice plants. I said, "Now I understand. You sell these." "Yes," she said with fair English. I noticed the big wash on the line, no screen doors. I said, "Well, this is a good supplement to your income." She didn't understand what I meant. I said, "It helps with expenses?" "Oh, no. These, no, not for house. Not for me. This for church," she said with her smile while wiping her hands on her apron. "You mean you do all this," I waved my hands across her front lawn, "for the church?" "Yes," she said proudly. "May I ask you how much this comes to? May I?"

She told me she turns it in to the church each three or four month period, I forget which. "How much?" I asked. I was rude and curious. (The house needed so much) She said, "It changes some times." "What was the most?" I asked. She answered, "\$964."

The Mexican people are almost 100% Catholic and they are faithful. When there is a funeral, parking is the problem. The procession can be a mile long; the cemetery can be parked full and along the roadside, too.

ΩΩΩΩΩ

I have done very limited driving in Mexico. We do go across the river at Progreso and drive around the town sometimes. We need the car there to utilize

the trunk. There are many stories of northerners involved in accidents and they are all bad. They do not recognize any insurance but theirs. You pay cash before you leave. The only safe way is to purchase Mexican insurance at the border at a reasonable cost of \$5 to \$6 per day.

I did drive a van load, 15 passengers down to Matamoros and on to Washington Beach shelling last week (a little over 100 miles round trip) but this park had rented the vans with Mexican insurance.

We picked up Rehrrers and Nolls one morning and drove northwest along the river 125 miles to tour Falcon Dam. This is a huge dam in the Rio Grande, one of three such that store water for irrigation in Texas and Mexico, too. Many people camp there to fish and is reported to be a good place.

We drove across the dam after an officer at the site checked us over. I drove the narrow little road to a village. This village was built by the Mexican government and the little village along the river was going to be flooded. The village is laid out square. We drove around the place and ate our picnic lunches at a little park. None of the storekeepers spoke English.

After the picnic, we decided to head for home. I drove back to the dam and got across to the check out station. There were two officers on duty. One stepped up to my window and asked the usual questions. I told him we looked a lot but bought nothing. Nevertheless, he said "Would you open your trunk please?" "Sure," I said as I jumped out with the keys. "We don't have anything. We didn't buy a thing." "Do you have any fruit?" "No," I said. None at all." The trunk came open and revealed six paper sacks from our lunch. The officer picked up one sack and reach down inside and **took out an orange** ! I was stunned. Someone had failed to eat all their lunch and left a nice big fat orange. Only one sack in six and he picked that one! Well, he just looked at me sternly for a moment then said, "Go ahead." We did. He smiled and waved to us but fruit is a no no. Isabel Noll forgot. Someone else said they had not eaten theirs but had thrown it away. Isabell forgot and he caught it. No harm done but we all learned a lesson and we never got caught again on the 'other side.' It's not a good feeling as these are Federal Men.

apparently loading passengers ahead somewhere, there was a fence near our car and directly out of our window stood a little Mexican boy relieving a full bladder right there using the old fence for a fire hydrant. He ignored us until the train moved up. The "bang" as the car jerked scared him so much he jumped straight up and ran full speed away from the train. It was so funny. Millie laughed all the rest of the day at the sight of that boy. We traveled on to Metamoras with lots of fun. Our bus tour guide met us at the railroad station and took us on a shopping tour in Metamoras and returned us to our home. The trains are old and had hard seats, the springs in the seat and backs were exposed and the windows were very dirty. Everything was that way and I later learned we had a good car. It is a cheap way to travel, slow and uncertain, but it provides a way to get around as many, many have no cars. We even saw oxen pulling carts and such.

JOBS

When one gets older, there comes time to think and when you do, you often reflect on the past. Now caught in a vastly inflated world with unrealistic prices for even modest things, I wonder why I didn't get a better paying job, a job with a pension and insurance benefits.

I enjoyed school very much. It was an interesting 12 year period of my life. I never gave thought to a job. In my mind, when I grew up, I wanted to fly. I was sure I would, some day. I wrote to Randolph Field, Texas and several other fields near San Antonio and got literature about flying. I even got some information on what it cost to learn. I couldn't come up with the money. Why didn't I even consider joining a branch of the service, the Air Force or Army or such? I just don't know why I never did give it thought.

When I graduated, I went to work for my dad for \$2.50 per week and the use of the car once a week. Then I decided to get into diesel engines and saved up my money 'til January 1, 1935. I had over \$32 and signed up for a home study course from Hemphill Diesel School in Chicago. This

correspondence course came each week with lessons and tests. When I completed this study, I expected to work on the railroad and begin as a mechanic on the diesel, a new and promising power, then with years and experience, become an engineer.

Upon completion, I did three weeks in Chicago for the actual experience on all types of engines. I think a letter from Mom telling of Dad's sickness, or just maybe it was an injury, as I recall, prompted me to come home as he was unable to do chores or husk the corn. Nothing was getting done and it was the fall of the year. I came home and went to farming and did so after Millie and I married.

Then along came the war. I went to Auburn, then to Ft. Wayne to sign up for the Air Force after all. When I got to the desk of a man in charge, he said I should go back to the farm as we were all going to need milk and eggs and such and I also had a wife and a small girl to raise now. "We don't need you at this time," he said.

About this time I learned to respect the work of the State Police and became friends with Russell Huffman of Hudson. He was a good state trooper and became promoted to detective. I decided I could do that if he could. I was driving bus now because the small Durst farm of 40 acres would not support us and the rented ground was all poor indeed. Well, I made application and the next thing I knew, the police were at Ashley and the school and also around Waterloo. At first, I didn't know why they were there but as folks told me a bit later, they were checking all my school records, church, home, police records, stores, neighbors and all were asked questions about me. Well I guess they needed new young folks and told me I passed.

I was notified to come to Indianapolis to take examinations. I went. Millie and Hubert went along. The roads were icy all the way. There was no Interstate highway then. There were no cars on the road and it was a good thing, too as I was hurrying in sections where I could.

There were 1300 there for a selection of 90 men. Of those 90 they would select 45. Mr. Huffman said that if I could survive the group of 90 then he would see that I would make the group of 45. I stayed with it all day and each exam weeded out a

BATTERIES

Upon arriving as usual in Harlingen one early October about 3 p.m. after the third day of travel, we proceeded to unload and set up Texas housekeeping.

Wayne and Opal Bowman always had the electricity and water turned on, readied the furnace for heat and air conditioning, lit the water heater, plugged in the refrigerator and loaded it with breakfast items such as milk, cereal, fruit etc. so we never needed to hurry to the store.

I unload the car while Millie checks out the kitchen cupboards and such. Both of us had been hurrying but found we missed seeing the big clock on the living room wall. It's a mirror type clock with gold trim about four feet long, battery operated. I take it down each spring and push it under a bed so it would be out of sight in the event of a burglary. I found myself looking up to an empty space on the wall and Millie said, "I can't work without that clock."

I went up to Wal-Mart, nearby, to get a couple of batteries. I always put new batteries in each fall and that would serve us 'til May when I removed them.

Wal-Mart is about two minutes away, and I hurried to the battery counter, grabbed two batteries and hurried back and got in the shortest check-out lane. There are 14 lanes so I got in the shortest one. There were only two or three customers ahead of me so I moved quickly to the cashier. The batteries were \$2.12. I reached in my pocket and handed the man the change, then reached for a billfold, but it wasn't there! I had tossed it on the counter when we arrived and had forgotten to put it back in my pocket. I stammered, stalled and finally said, "I didn't bring my billfold. If you will put those under the counter, I'll run home and get it. We live nearby and I'll be right back." He was irritated. I could see a line waiting and here I was causing trouble. It was an embarrassing and awkward situation. I heard a voice behind me say, "I have money. I pay." I turned around and there stood a short, plump lady of about 25 digging thru her purse for, and came up with, \$2! I was shocked. "No," I said. "I'll return with the money." Her husband was behind her carrying their baby. "Take

money," he said. "She will pay." "If you will sign the register slip with your name and address, I'll do it," I replied. They did and I went home with the batteries and their name and address, but they had no phone number. I hunted them up later that week and left \$3 for the two that were advanced. I observed their worn carpet and their furniture was in such poor condition; they needed so much (so much THINGS) but yet they had so much -- heart and warmth. When she gave me, a total stranger, the \$2, her husband said, "You need not pay back. We give to you." I've learned to love the Mexican people.

TRAIN

One day a car load of us signed up for a train trip thru the edge of Mexico. It cost \$13 each. The van picked us up at the park and took us to Reynosa. After sightseeing around the city, we went to the rail station. Now things are more primitive in Mexico and much is hard for us to understand. We had to wait on the train. When it came, it got within 200 yards and jumped the tracks. There it sat, straddling one rail. There would be no ride that day. We returned home and tried the next week. As we waited the second time, our bus driver told us the only problem that we'd have would be *getting on* the train, as there would be a crowd of people, and he was right! Trains are the universal transportation system for the Mexicans to travel. It cost 35¢ to travel from Reynosa to Metamoros and \$2 to go from Reynosa to old Monteray, 170 miles away. The train stopped near me and I grabbed the handrails on each side of the door blocking the entrance 'til our group got ready and all climbed aboard. We all got a seat. The car was old and all that, but so what. When the seats became full, a man and boy came on board and sang and played a guitar. After several songs, he preached a sermon, of course it was all in Spanish! 25 minutes later he disappeared and the train pulled out!

It was an interesting ride. We passed by small villages and houses near the track. The train traveled slowly and would stop here and there, even in the country or at an intersection where people were waiting. The tracks lead us near houses at the edge of towns. One time while we were sitting still,

because he couldn't move it around. I made a nice base for it with some sculpture for it to set in, polished it smooth, had it chromed, ordered four chrome and black casters and got it all together one day, his "off day." We raised the machine and set it into this base. It fit quite well and looked nice too. He could now bring the machine to the patient. He was so pleased and as the result, he called me to say he was coming over to our house with a lifetime proposition. Guess what it was? He and his wealthy sister would buy the factory at Waterloo, known then as the Wakefield Co. They were from Detroit and would manufacture car parts for Ford, G.M. and Chrysler. They knew all the big men in those factories and had investments there and sat in on meetings. He had his own private airplane in World War II to supervise dental offices during the war all thru the south. He made three trips to our house to get me to agree to manage the help only; hire and fire, select the employees, that's all. They would buy and sell all we could make. They would raise a million and a half dollars in three days and pay for the plant. I would begin hiring the help and would be set up on a yearly salary and percentage of all the profits. He said, "You've never seen or even imagined the income we can generate from this opportunity. We will have a market for all we make. We will get the contracts and such." I wouldn't budge. I feared to hire and fire just wouldn't work for me. I'd be sick to my stomach all the time, eventually the factory would own me and I no longer would be my own boss and would become too close to all I employed. I'd do the job but would not live a long and happy life. No go!

For Matter of Record

In June, during the early '40's, we were attending a Children's Day program at church on a Sunday evening. When stepping out the door looking east, we could see a huge fire some miles away.

We drove and drove to locate the source only to arrive at the Hamilton road and County Road 16. The big barn was burning on Vern and Gertie's farm! Louise Badman's husband, Laurence, and children lived there. The barn was totally destroyed with the entire contents leaving a frightened

and worried family. (Louise was Millie's half-sister ten years older. Vern's first wife died and he married Gertie Wilhelm who owned those two farms.)

As result, about one week later, Vern came to me and said, "We have decided not to rebuild that barn. We are too old to go thru that and the cost will be too great." He continued, "Here is what we can do. We will sign the deed to that 100 acre farm to Louise and Mildred. You folks then can do as you want."

We drove over to Laurence's and told them what Vern and Gertie said and we would try to make it easy for them to keep the farm. I said that we would take \$100 per acre for Millie's half if they wanted to buy it. I was shocked and dismayed when Laurence said, "What you want us to do is move, don't you?" I told him that I wanted to befriend them. There was 100 acres of black ground that I thought was worth more and he could pay the \$5,000 as he could with no due date and no interest. He said, "We'll move first!" Well, we went home and were just sick at heart. I didn't know what to do. It upset me so to think I might be contributing to the two sisters never speaking and such. I couldn't take it and went back and told Laurence we would take \$50 per acre for Millie's half. He said, "Well move. That's what you want."

The next morning Vern asked me what we had done. I told him I offered it to them for \$50 per acre. His face got red and got so angry with me and called me the south end of a horse. When he cooled down, he said, "That's 100 acres of black, good corn ground. Go down town and borrow the money and buy the place. You only need to buy half. You can get that money right now. Do it, today!"

I couldn't. I knew it meant trouble in the family so I didn't do anything. Two days passed and Vern said, "I have an answer. We will deed that 100 acre farm to Louise and then this farm here will go to 'Mim' and you, but you may have to wait ten or fifteen years. How's that?" Well, I was happy. I didn't expect anything to be flat out given to us. I had been concerned a little as we had put so much in the house we built on the place and had no deed for an acre or even a lot, but it all worked out fine. They were happy and lived on the place they called home until their death. Louise died first and Laurence resided there until his death only recently.

couple hundred. By late evening, I was in the 90, then decided not to join! At that time I would work every week-end for a long time until they hired again. This would have left Millie to care for Barbara every Sunday.

When Millie was sick and in her wheel chair, I became discouraged with farm work and sold out. Then we bought Dad's tenant house for \$250 and moved it to Millie's home place where it now stands, built on and took over the welding shop and was still driving the school bus. As I mentioned earlier in my writings, we had but \$3200 cash left when all bills, expenses and debts were paid. I knew there was going to be a need for more money and approached the president of the Waterloo bank. He asked how much I thought I needed to borrow and I thought \$2000 to \$3000 would be enough. There was no deed, just building on Vern's farm. No collateral at all but he agreed. Before completion I had borrowed more than \$7000! We paid the loan back at a rate of \$100 per month with only a month's extension due to Christmas.

One winter when income was low, I did go work for the Auburn Dana Corp. to salvage clutch parts for them before a yearly inventory. The hubs of clutches were welded together with the wrong outside shell that holds the clutch facing. Others had tried, they came and went, only the regular maintenance man could do it. The inside was packed with grease and careless use of the torch brought instant fire. I had no trouble there, in fact, I was supposed to count them as I cut but only did so the first nite as the boss said "Don't count any more. You have cut far too many and no one else can work for us if we set that rate. You cut whenever you can but let me do the counting." I did. I cut three bins of them to salvage at 87¢ a piece on the inside. They gave me a raise the third day and also one later in two or three weeks. When I completed the last one before the inventory time, they called me in the office. They said they had a surprise and showed me drawings and pictures of an all new welding room for me with all new equipment, welders and everything plus all new material to work with, good pay another 67¢ per hour raise to start and insurance and pension. It was a very good opportunity. I could have made a good living here only working eight hours per day with vacations and such, but I declined it.

Russell Walker came to our house one evening and said the DeKalb County Council had made choice for a new director of the Welfare office. I was selected, if I would consent. They had discussed me for a time and then told Russell to bring me in. He was there three times but I decided not to go. It would have been interesting work in those days.

Russell Dunn told me he could help me get a job in the Waterloo Post Office as there was a vacancy there. I could later transfer to a rural route delivery, which I had told him I'd like, but didn't care about being inside sorting mail every day for six years or so 'til I got the outside route so declined that job, reluctantly.

One day Guy Lepley called me into his office. His brother, Cecil, was there. Cecil was a good man with a good job. He was a vice president or such position with the Federal Land Bank. He had to locate a replacement for a vacancy. He said both he and Guy were in a position to arrange things so that I could have that job. I told them that I had to do advance schooling or college training. They said they were looking for a "down to earth" man who could walk onto a farm, who could understand the problems involved and talk farming and livestock, a man who knew a cow from a horse. This was tempting. The salary was not discussed but I declined! The job would have been interesting with no doubt but I would have had to move 50 miles west to begin, with the understanding that I could relocate near here as soon as possible. I gave this considerable thought. Guy thought it was a good opportunity for a career.

I think I was more fortunate than some who never got the first chance, but somehow I enjoyed what I was doing and was always afraid to make the needed change. I think when we married I expected to have three or four kids. I thought everyone did, but it did not turn out that way and perhaps that is one reason I was so reluctant to give up the school bus route. I enjoyed first graders right thru to grade twelve and got fun out of their experiences and never tired of that.

Perhaps the best chance to make money came when I ran the welding shop. A local dentist in Kendallville bought a new big X-ray machine. It was a disappointment

Ohio to attend the Ohio, annual rally of Good Sams. It was there we signed the register noting where we lived. As a result of those get-togethers, the Indiana State Director got our name. He came to see us asking if we would organize this area. He said the main office had a number of Good Sam National members around the Ft. Wayne area, but there was no local chapter. We agreed and got notices out to all those around Ft. Wayne. We had set a location and a nite to meet and also included information for candidates. We had arranged to meet in the "turtle top" bank building on Coliseum Blvd. in Ft. Wayne.

That evening, Millie wanted to take advantage of the trip and get a new pair of shoes. We did just that in the shoe store nearby. We hadn't thought about leaving early. I suppose we should have been there an hour early to meet and greet the members as they arrived. It would have been best. As we drove in, I had to hunt for a parking spot. I said, "This is no darn good. There must be another meeting here tonite. I don't like that." Now there was no other meeting -- we were it! We walked into a room full of total strangers, all kinds; short, fat, thin, tall, rich, poor, quiet and loud, a few black folks, but mostly white, waiting to discover who had called this meeting and what was it about, where would it go, how much would it cost and what would be the benefits? Well, I had nothing to lose; no cut in pay, no job to loose, so I recall telling them, "If we are to form a chapter, and I have anything to do with it, I want that guy there and his wife in it, and it *will* work." I pointed to an older couple, Hugo and Lena Wingert, both German and both hard workers, salt of the earth folks. They smiled and said little. The accent was still there. They were great workers and good friends. He had a pilot license and could do anything. . Their dress and crumpled hair was a camouflage. Their heart was warm and rich. He did me a lot of good turns. If I did well, he would mention it. If I made a mistake, he told me why. I never tired of his German stories. He was a boy seven years old when he began to work in his father's bakery. He would be up at 4 a.m. and at his job to cut the date of the bread each day as his dad took it from the oven. The day had to be on each loaf as it all went to the big hospital on the hill. His dad got paid for each

loaf that was delivered one week **after** baking. If they ran out and sent for more and he sent bread less than one week old, he wouldn't be paid for that. He saw me pick up a slice of warm fresh bread at a camp-out; he was behind me with his hand on my shoulder and told me to "Put that back." I did. "Never do that," he said. "That is the worst thing you can eat!"

His stories of flying were good also.

He was a friend of the Jim and Tom Kelley, Ft. Wayne car dealers.

The first two or three years, I remained President. Then we passed a rule that one year at a time was enough.

We never had controversy or confrontation all those years. There was so much fun and mutual benefit. We were all about the same age and much alike, that each one, I believe, had the goal of making the club go and did whatever they saw to get that done.

The first or second year, I saw three of the men each bring a can of beer and sit around a picnic table. I thought, "Oh, Oh, this could be war." Well, I went right to the table right then and said, "We are not going to have that here. We have no rule objecting, but we have a goal to reach and our standard will not include this." Those three men never challenged the order and complied. They remained in the club a long time but eventually dropped out. As the club seemed to shake out those who didn't like the standards we sat, more and more came in. We had to pass a rule: No more new members, only replacements. We had a church service every Sunday. All members of this club attended church either back at their home church, where they may have been needed as Elders, Deacons, teachers, specials, etc. or at the church services at the camp area. The services developed to a point that I received letters now and then telling that the camp service was more meaningful out in the woods area or just off away from it all. It set up for good lessons and sermons as members came up with some of the best devotions I have ever heard. The club grew in many ways far beyond our expectations

Tricks and jokes were played on folks like you wouldn't believe. They would fill a book themselves. We plain had fun. We did

INVENTION

When Millie's Uncle Carl Bocke retired from a lifetime career of railroading, he told me he had an idea for a tool needed on the trains for the crew. A tool that would enable them to disconnect the air hose separating one car from another. This job required both hands and all the twist and turn a man had at that moment. He gave me his idea and I went to work on it. I devoted spare time like mornings or evenings. I would take it and run down to Waterloo and try it on freight cars along the siding. It took about a year. Carl would come up from New Haven and we thought it worked well, like a bottle opener. With one hand, he'd pop those lines open for a cut off. Well, he suggested I make the handle end like a wrecking bar for pry if needed or chipping ice or whatever. I did. I made three of them and had them chromed. I also made a small model to send to Washington. They wrote back and said it was a good tool but would grant no patent as it was too near a previous tool used to roll the big wheels onto a locomotive.

I got two appointments to see men of great influence. J. H. VanMoss, president of the car and foundry company in Chicago. He was a gracious man and told me it could be a good tool and to sell it to the union. I saw the president of the Santa Fe Railroad, I can't recall his name, in Chicago. He took time to talk to me and told me the same thing. In the meantime, all three tools were stolen. I had one in Pittsburgh rail yard, Chicago and New Haven and I could not get a patent, so I let it go. Carl died shortly after also.

CAMPING

club stories

We had such good times at the once per month get-together with camper members. Each one tried to assure the other members of a good time, and they did, but was a challenge to entertain them.

At times, the whole club would come to our house on the Auburn-Ashley road. Sometimes we camped close around the house; the front and back yards were full of trailers and motor homes and sometimes we

spread out in the low-ground area near the creek.

In August of 1974, we were a large group. The weather was nice and we were ready for fun. I had borrowed the big 48 passenger church bus and had it there to use as I wished. On Saturday morning, I took a goodly load of members back to the gravel pit. I told them they could hunt colored stones 'til 11:15, no longer. We were to board the bus at 11:10 sharp. They got so interested, I couldn't get 'em in. I told them I always tried to be home at 11:20 a.m. as the mail plane came by and dropped our mail. They *knew* that was a joke and I could not hurry them. In an effort to have some fun, I had written about twenty or more letters to various club members. I had signed various names, most of which I've now forgotten, but to our president, I signed Richard Nixon, as he had just resigned in 1974. I told our president what to do and not to do. (I had planned out an "air drop" with Wayne Bowman. He agreed to come over our place in his plane fly low, full throttle and dump a bag full of letters on us at exactly 11:20 a.m. and there I was still at the gravel pit!) I saw the plane in the circle now. Well, Wayne saw the bus across the creek at the pit yet, so he turned away and gave me more time. I got 'em all on and just got them unloaded and reminded them it was a little past time for the air mail. Wayne came across, tree top high, full throttle and Bob Holman threw out the letters. Everyone got letters and we sat down and read them aloud. It was fun.

One time I got 50 road signs from our neighbor, John Butler, who worked for the road department, and laid out the drive from the road to the camp area with -- SLOW - STOP - YIELD - CONSTRUCTION - SCHOOL - CURVE - HILL and on and on. They had to weave and make all turns and we made 'em comply. It was fun to watch. It was laid out in a narrow, single lane, too. They had to watch out.

Wilbur Brand told of his trip thru Japan. Dan and Darlene Scrange ran their video tape of their three week trip in China. That was good, too.

Millie really was the one who took the first step in beginning the Indiana Good Samaritan Club Ft. Wayne chapter #9. Two or three years in a row we went to Lima,

woods. A time or two he was mad at me and was justified both times too. Many more times I did things asking for it. He would just look at me for a time. That did it for me.

From the life style he knew to the life here with all the responsibilities, he made a great change and was a good father to me although I didn't realize it then, it dawned upon me later on.

He had but one criteria to judge a man: 1. Did he work? 2. Was he honest? That's all. The harder a man worked, the better a man he was and if he kept his word, he was a good man. These were important and little else mattered. However, some other things tended to reinforce his approval, especially if he was a Democrat!

I had a good farm home, near a church, in the midst of a good community and all that was needed there. Midway in school life, I did a scrapbook on what I would do when I "grew up". Well, my first choice was that I was going to fly. I wrote to various flying schools for information. I became enchanted with the prospect and was determined that someday I'd be flying for fun, with passengers, or just cargo; I didn't care. I don't know why I didn't consider the Air Force or Navy or such. I used my name as it was given me, Jean Russell (Davinroy) Reinoehl on all my correspondence. One letter of inquiry came back to me addressed "Miss Jean Reinoehl". When my classmates learned of this, they had great fun with it. I grew so tired of it that I began spelling my name "Gene", a fact I would later understand as not a wise thing to do but I changed all signatures.

Seldom did I even reflect upon my background as it meant little or nothing to me. I had all I needed and wanted; a good life, great friends, school, home, church. I had no needs that I knew of. Forgetting the fact I was brought into this family from the outside, I never gave it a thought until one time Millie and I talked of marriage. Well, I right off I said I'd never get married until I knew more about my background. My health was good, but how good? Were there mental or physical weaknesses to come along? No, I couldn't do it so we dismissed it. As time went along, we became more and more serious and decided to marry. What the heck!

we'll cross any of those bridges as we meet 'em.

About five years into the marriage, Barbara developed strange tooth decay. We took her to several dentists until she wouldn't go or cooperate anymore. In all this frustration, someone told us of a dentist in Kendallville who had great luck with children, so we went. Barbara now was a problem. She was reluctant to even talk about her problem but Millie kept at her and finally we went to Dr. Burton Kenan in Kendallville, In. He was a big, big man, middle aged with a good reassuring smile and he understood children. He took a lot of time talking to Barb and to us before getting her in the chair. He didn't do any drilling and there was no hassle, nothing. I can't recall whether he drilled any place that first day, he may have repaired a small hole as we were there a long time. His drill was an air powered unit - the latest. It ran so much faster than the older dentists we had visited. He assured her he would not hurt her even the slightest. He was very successful. Upon completion of the appointment, he would give Barbara a choice of trinket goodies and he had given her a calendar to pick out the next appointment. She liked that opportunity each time. After that first trip, I never went along. When she would return from a visit with the dentist, she would tell me all the details and show me the gift selected, the date of her return and which tooth would be repaired next. It was great. Millie had her teeth all repaired and brought up to date and announced to me she had set a day for me to start. *What a loving wife!* I had all the answers ready as to why I wouldn't be able to go; there was no time, it cost too much and more reasons like that, but on the date established, I went over. The Dr. was careful and considerate and did a superior job. On the second or third trip, I was relaxing in the chair as he prepared a filling when he said, "What is your name?" "Reinoehl", I said. He said, "I know that, but your hair and coloring are not a Reinoehl. Reinoehl is German or Dutch or something like that but I don't see that here. What is your name? Names are my hobby. Names tell you much about a person and I don't think you are a Reinoehl." I told him of my birth in East St. Louis and about being brought here to live. He said, "It seems like you would be curious

little plays and skits of everyday life that had a lesson too.

A couple women once said, "Gene, we know a couple that have wanted to come to our club for a long time. They are good folks, real good, but the Mrs. tells stories and her language is bad. We keep putting them off, but they said they were going to be at the next meeting. What are we going to do? What will happen if they come?" "Tell them to come, I'm not afraid. First off, she will have no one to tell a story to and I doubt if she uses any bad language. She will either shape up quick or not return. Well they showed up and they became perfect members quickly and no one else knew of the concern. The club had no better worker or better at going for the goal, great folks.

The club celebrates its birthday each year

the second week in September. The club's birthday and my birthday fall on the same day, September 11. As I write this, our club will celebrate the 18th anniversary of our beginning. The last 15 have been held on the Robroch Popcorn Farms near Huntington. Ann and Ernie were Charter Members along with a few of us. We camp and meet at their place each Fall. Ernie died of Cancer years ago, but Ann has us there as always.

Perhaps one of the great benefits has become evident in the event of accident, injury or hospitalization of a member. The club members turn out with great loyalty. Perhaps it's because we are all in the same age group and may be the next to need help, who knows. We are more conscious of this now. Often I've heard it said that the club did more and was here with help even more than my church or relatives were. Anyhow, they do show up when word gets out but they get to work quickly. It's been good.

BACKGROUND

Among the earliest things I remember are the times Mom would tell me of what little she knew of my background. She did it so well and with warmest affection, whatever I asked and wondered about was given to me. As result, I had little or no curiosity as to my birth relatives. The only times would be when someone would ask or bring up the subject. It was a frequent topic

around home when company would come, especially Mom's brothers. As this conversation ceased in a few years, I forgot it to a great degree. I had absolutely no reason to even ponder over it for a second. Mom was the greatest mother a child could have. There left no doubt of her love for me and in the early years gave me much of her time. Grandma helped with house and garden work and a few chores. At that time there was less cooking and canning but almost no time was spent away from home. I was the main attraction and care was given to me at every turn. Because of her completeness as a mother, I could not entertain thoughts of "someone else".

Dad came along and seemed to take a like'n to me. Now that I look back, I marvel at that, for he was a woodsman, a fighter (in earlier days), a railroader, a mail carrier, a bouncer for the Ginnivan Shows, a body guard for Mr. Guinnivan as there were large amounts of cash in possession when the banks were closed. He enjoyed the fights and rough and tumble life.

His earlier marriage and divorce was seldom a topic of conversation, but the little he said led me to think he had not been ready for home and responsibility but now he was so quickly moved from the whatever, wherever, whenever life to a farm, a run down farm with a wife, an aging mother-in-law, an adopted boy a couple years old and a host upon host of relatives on the wife's side. While Mom more than adequately fulfilled the wide range of duties for motherhood, Dad accepted his chore and went to work. I called him "Pop" most of the time and he was good to me indeed. I was very fortunate I know, because he accepted me as his own son right off. When I could carry a small jug, I would take him a drink back in the fields. He would rest the horses and joke with me or tell me a story of early life in Fairfield township. Very, very seldom he would be cross to me but sometimes he was more stern about duties but never angry. Once he was so disappointed with me as I made a febel attempt to deceive him. I'll never forget that, but not one cross word, not one, but I could see his disappointment. That hurt stayed with me for a long time. In time, that wound healed, but the scar still remains as I lied to him about counting the hogs back in the

about your relatives." "Only a little," I said. "I used to be a little interested before Millie and I were married, but once passed the hurdle, I've forgotten all about it. I have little desire or need, only a bit of curiosity - just wonder what they were like." "Well, I'd like something to do on my vacation. I'd like to see what I could find out about you. My wife, Mary, comes from St. Louis and we will spend a week or two there real soon. If you don't care, I'd like to see if I could find some of your relatives or something you could hang on to." I said that while I had no desire to know any more, it might be interesting to know. "O.K." he said. "I'll poke around and see what I can learn." When he returned, he sent word he wanted to see me. I drove over to his house and he told us what he had learned. He said, "I ran down the names of relatives and found no skeletons. All seemed to be good working folk. The largest percent of them are school teachers; men and women. Some have worked for the post office, some school custodians, but I found not one in jail or the like. I didn't find out anything about your mother. I have a couple telephone numbers here of your relation. If you wish to call them, perhaps they could tell you about her." I brought the numbers home. Millie and I discussed it and I had my curiosity raised by now and told her I'd like to know more now. I didn't think I did, but as we talked of it, I was more interested.

I took \$13 worth of change in two coat pockets, went to the Auburn Hotel. I put a coin in the telephone, dialed the operator and told her what I would be doing. I told her that as I got information, I'd place another call and I asked if she would stay on the line so that I would get the telephone numbers right and then place the next call. I had no idea where this would lead, but I was excited.

I called a number in St. Joseph, Missouri and they could tell me nothing. I told each one that I was an old friend of Pearle's and I'd like to know if she was living and in what city. The first person called knew nothing but gave me a number to call in another town and so it went. Some never heard of Pearle, some did. One person told me she was living in Kansas City the past year, she knew that. I told the operator perhaps this would be our last call. I'd try information in Kansas City. The operator

said, "You relax. I've got the Kansas City police on the phone now. They will help you." We waited, at least I did, and took a deep breath. In a short time, (I suppose) the police gave the operator a number that would be likely to reach her. I told the operator, who had been so faithful for nearly *an hour*, "OK, I'm ready. Call that number in Kansas City!" She did. A lady answered the phone. I said, "Who is this?" "This is Ceil," she said. I told her I was trying to locate Pearle. "Why? I'm Pearle's sister and I want to know what you want." (I knew she would ask. Now I was sorry I had pryed into a family that I had no need to do. Someone could get hurt and hurt badly) I then hesitated a moment, typical of me under stress, then as best I could, I told her why I wanted to talk to Pearle. "I have reason to believe she is my birth mother. I'm calling from Indiana where I live on a farm." There was a long, quiet pause, then the lady asked, "What is your birth date?" "I was born September 11, 1916 in East St. Louis. My first name is Gene, my middle name is Russell, my last name is Davinroy. My mother was Pearle Dorothy Davinroy." The shock must have been great; the phone was silent but we were still connected. I could hear her breathing so heavily. I was thinking that I'd like to put my arm around whoever it was and forget all that had happened. "What do I do now? What will happen to us and to them?" After what seemed an eternity, the lady's voice came on. "I am Ceclia, Pearle's sister. You died of tuberculosis in babyhood." "Not yet," I said. "I've heard of this but I'm very much alive." She said, "I must go now. You call this number tomorrow at this time. I'll have Pearle here and you may talk to her yourself." She seemed like a considerate person but I could tell by her voice change and speech delay along with delayed breathing, she was under great shock and yet I tried not to hurt anyone.

I returned to the operator and told her I had \$13 with me and would pay the rest of the charges tomorrow at the telephone office when I came down. She said, "Deposit \$3 only for one call." She would take no more. She said, "I listened in on all this. I wouldn't have missed it. I've never done anything like this before." I tried to get her name or her operator number. No sale. (she

refused her name and number and said they were not allowed to do that no matter what.) I thanked her over and over and told her when I did learn her name, I'd contact her. I did just that about three years later when selling a car to another operator who revealed her name when I inquired if she knew any operator who had talked about the incident. (at that time, the operators were local, not from a great distance away) I was able to locate her and spoke to her about it. She remembered it quite well so I know she was impressed.

The next day I was back at Auburn, same time, same phone. I called the number in Kansas City and Cecilia came on the phone. She said Pearle was there and would come to the phone.

(Now it's hard to explain one's feelings. You might use such words as anxiety, concern, apprehension and such, all put together would give some idea. Each alone would not. My entire system, brain pressure, taut muscle, nerves, all systems were alerted and ready for what?)

The next voice was "Aunt" Pearle's (I called her) nice quiet voice as I expected from a little, small lady of perhaps 40 years. She asked me my date of birth etc. She had been prepared for all this by her sister so the shock was of less impact. I can't recall the conversation, but she said she was leaving for New York City in the morning and would be there ten days or so and would stop off upon the return trip. She said she used to ride the New York Central 20 Century Limited each month to and from the East coast. Now she went by plane mostly, but would take a train to wherever I said. "Well," I said, "You could come to Toledo, Ohio. We can meet you there by train or plane. It is about 90 miles east of us or you can come to Ft. Wayne, about 30 miles south of us." She said she had been to Ft. Wayne before to Wolf & Dessaur department store and would come to Ft. Wayne. She would send us a telegram when the time came. I never thought to ask how I might recognize her and was sorry about that. **Now, the die was cast!**

Well, the wire came. The train would arrive in Ft. Wayne at such a time, like 4:30 p.m. on the certain day. Millie dressed in her finest and looked so nice. I was proud of her and Barbara and away we went to the train

station. They sat and looked at books and magazines. I sat and stood and walked and thought as time dragged out but after a while, it neared the time and I grew alarmed that I wouldn't know who she was as a crowd was gathering. In those days, the train carried many passengers and twice as many came to meet the train. I guess I thought she would be the only one getting off and would just step off and say, "Hello, here I am."

I went up to the dispatcher and told him that I was to meet a person coming in on this train and I didn't know how to do it. He said, "Will you recognize the one you're meeting?" I said, "It's been a long time, but I think I might." "Well," he said, "if you think so, go up on the upper deck platform when the train comes in and if you do, fine. If you don't recognize the person, come back here, give me the name and I will page them on the P.A." No trouble here, so I walked up on the platform. Millie and Barbara remained below. The train was rolling in now and the engine went on beyond me. Once the train stopped, a large crowd moved to the right, where the step was placed out, and almost immediately, people began to get off. I was surprised at how many came down the steps and began to hurry, myself, fearing I would be late. Before I quite got to the crowd to my right, I got a feeling that I was going in the wrong direction. I stopped and turned completely around and headed back, passing the point where I entered the platform. I kept my eyes on the conductor as he was assisting the passengers off. Here, too, was a large crowd and a steady stream of folks leaving the train. Just as I got to the edge of the crowd, I saw a lady come down the steps. Not a lady I pictured I was looking for at all, but a lady I watched as she entered the crowd. I cut through the crowd in a hurry keeping an eye on her so as not to lose sight. I finally approached her and said two words -- "I'm Gene." She answered almost immediately -- "I'm Pearle." I had never spoken to another person or considered it for a moment. It was strange to me because thinking of a girl at an early age, unmarried, having a child, my mental picture was an image of a small girl, a picture that had been with me as long as I remember. This lady was the opposite of all my expectations. She was tall and straight. A woman of culture and selfmade confidence and graciousness.

CONCERNING "THE CATALOG"

(written 1993)

A short notice in a recent newspaper caught little attention but referred to a thing that greatly impacted early life - "Sears will cease publication of the SEARS CATALOG."

Now perhaps the "Big Book" was less important to city folks who had all modes of transportation; trains, street cars and automobiles, but to the vast areas of rural America, it was of great importance. Once a year, the great Chicago store came into the house and to every individual of the household. When it became time to expect the new edition, how we would watch for the mailman, who must have felt somewhat less enthusiastic, to bring it. In the farm lands, long distances from a city, to us with no automobiles, no electricity, no telephone, it was a source of tremendous interest and value.

I would lay on the floor and spend hours looking thru the toy sections and my imagination grew by leaps and bounds.

Mom would look at the cooking utensils and hundreds of items she could use but her orders were always the same - yard goods.

Dad would look at work clothes and tools and fencing, not so much as to order as to get a price estimate of things he needed.

Grandma would look at yarns and underwear, stockings and writing paper.

What was in there? Everything. It seemed to me that whatever you had need for, just look it up in the big index and turn right to it.

You could sit right down at the table, take an order blank from the back and order a new claw hammer, carpet, oil cloth, or choose from various grades of warm underwear, gloves, shoes, etc. Sears offered a full line of farm machinery starting with the Bradley tractor. When Millie and I were married, I purchased a Bradley manure spreader on rubber tires 6:50 x 16. It worked well, but I had to add chains to the rear wheels in the winter to get the needed traction to unload. It seems to me that it cost over \$100 but I can't remember.

For a while, Sears sold automobiles, called "motor buggies" because that's what they were. For 30 years they sold houses,

two story prefabricated houses, with all plans included, for \$1495. There were over 100,000 of them sold. We recently looked at one in Galveston, TX while sightseeing there.

Sears displayed wide choices of rifles, shotguns and hand guns. I have a bolt action repeating shot gun from Sears. A man owed me \$26 for welding work from my shop. He brought me the new gun and asked me to take it for the bill. It cost him \$27 freight and all.

The 1969 catalog offered a new hospital bed, manual operated for \$98.50. In early days, 70% of America lived in vast rural areas. They shopped wisely and sincerely, not by impulse. An order would be made out listing each item separately then recording the freight charges for each: a bath tub, kitchen knife or cook stove each had a price and weight with corresponding freight charge.

Mom would start an order with the usual 1 1/2 yards of gingham or cotton print. If it came to \$1.14 there was freight to add such as 6¢ or whatever. Items were added to the order blank from time to time then sent in when we had the money.

Mom helped me save the \$3 plus freight to get a scooter. I got 5¢ for each quart of ground cherries I could find for Uncle Charley. Mom would share pennies from the sale of eggs or a hen when the huckster came by.

She was always making clothes for someone or patching Dad's overalls. She would order thread for everything. I can't imagine where she got time to use spools and spools of thread.

One short note here: It was a common practice to "retire" the *old* catalog to a very practical use. They were often taken to the out house where they served a two-fold purpose; for reading in leisure moments of mild weather and the other service was cosmetic, but very necessary to say the least, but always appreciated because of the convenient size and shape of the pages!

Ida Alice Thomson, born March 5, 1856/ died April 8, 1935 - married **Almeran Parmenas Benjaml**n, born September 28, 1848/died August 17, 1893.

Their children

Orley Sylavanus b. 1-12-1875 d.9-3-1957
Clayton Spencer b. 9-14-1876 d. 5-9-1954
Marion J. - 5-7-187 d.
Jennie Mahala b.1-26-1881 d. 6-4-1951
Irma Lillian 8-10-1883 d.
Glen Dale b.4-2-1885 d. 4-24-1887
Joel Russell b. 5-4-1890 d. 12-22-1951
*Mary May b. 5-10-1892 d. 2-18-1954
Austin Parmenas b. 4-6-1894

***Mary May Benjamin**, born May 10, 1892/died February 18, 1954 - married Roy Cicero Stomm (born June 13, 1891/died April 19, 1917) on May 13, 1914.

***Mary May Benjamin Stomm** then married **Charles Relnoehl**, (born July 11, 1874/died March 28, 1962) on January 26, 1919

Jean (Gene) Russell Davinroy Relnoehl, born September 11, 1916 - married Mildred J. Wise, (born June 23, 1917), on March 4, 1939

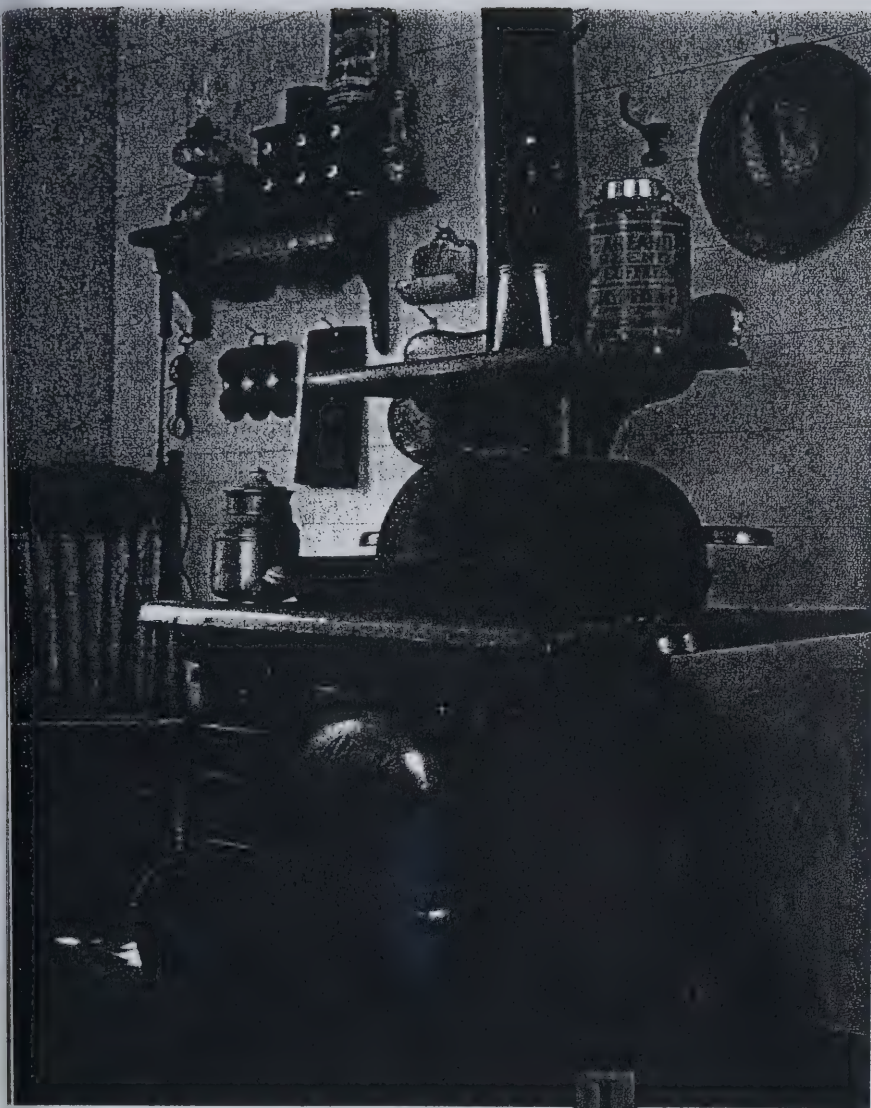
Dr. Samuel Thomson's Ointment

(Grandpa's Salve)

"Grandpa's Salve", as perfected by Dr. Samuel Thomson, has been somewhat of a family tradition and has been handed down through the succeeding generations of the family The recipe is as follows:

Take 1 1/2 pounds of lard
3/4 pound rosin
1/2 pound beeswax
1 oz. oil of spike

Place ingredients in a pan and simmer until all is melted. Set back to cool and the salve is ready to use.



BLACK BEAUTIES

*Those old
cast-iron stoves
did much
more than fix
mouth-watering
meals...
they warmed
our hearts!*

By Montrue Larkin
St. George, Utah

If you're old enough to remember the slogan "Kalamazoo—direct to you", you remember the cast-iron cookstoves that warmed America's kitchens for decades.

These were the stoves that turned out cherry pies with exquisite crusts. The next evening they'd yield mouth-watering rice-and-custard puddings. Their kettles of soup and big pots of beans warmed us on wash-days. And cottage cheese came not from a carton, but from a pan of milk simmering on the stoves' back plates.

As delicious as it is to reminisce about those old family dishes, these "black beauties" served many useful functions beyond cooking.

On cold winter nights, the stove was used to warm a flatiron, a stove lid or even a rock. Later, these would be wrapped in a towel, and when placed beneath the covers those radiant bundles made your bed cozy for hours.

The Saturday night bath (in a No. 3 tub with water from the stove reservoir) was a national ritual. With blinds drawn and doors shut, the room became hot and steamy and

*"Stove blacking gave
the old monster
a like-new look..."*

smelled of Palmolive soap. Who can ever forget the wonderful feeling of a hot bath, a flannel nightgown and a warm flatiron?

Even an Incubator

A friend of mine relates she was so tiny at birth that her family lined a shoe box with cotton and set her on the oven door. She got along just fine.

Another friend tells of her premature birth and the doctor who said she wouldn't live unless kept constantly warm. The midwife said, "Give her to me." She emptied the water reservoir and then lined it with a blanket. She lovingly tucked the baby in and vigilantly kept the stove warm. It worked, because that baby grew up to tell the story!

A snapping cookstove fire was just the thing to get you going on cold mornings before work or school. You'd grab your clothes and run downstairs to stand near the stove to dress.

Monday was "washday", and a really hot fire and lots of water were needed to get clothes clean. The copper boiler sat on the front two plates to get maximum heat.

When the water was ready, the whites were put in boiling water with homemade brown soap. Later on, the clothes had to be wrung out by hand. It was long, hard, tedious and even dangerous work. But what woman would dare hang out her wash unless it was just as white as the neighbor's?

Heated the Irons, Too

These were the days before wash-and-wear, so ironing was essential. Flatirons were heated on top of the stove. You used one until it cooled, then released the heavy iron from its handle. You exchanged the cool iron for a hot one by clamping the handle onto another iron atop the stove.

Periodically, you had to let the stove cool so you could apply a liberal coat of stove blacking, which gave the old monster a like-new look.

If you were smart, you held off from doing this job if you were planning to be seen in public anytime soon. It took many hours of washing and rewashing to erase the telltale black from your hands.

Then, when you finished with the blacking,

you used Bon Ami to polish the chrome trim. You buffed and buffed it with an old rag or some crumpled newspaper to give everything a nice shine.

Cleaning and maintaining those old stoves required an awful lot of work. But it was important work. For, unlike the impersonal self-cleaning ranges and microwaves of today, those old cast-iron stoves warmed a lot more than just food. More than anything, they warmed our hearts.



Charley and Mary Reinoehl
1919



The Reinoehl Family - 1934
Charley 60, Nina 14 mos., Mary 42, Alice 6,
Hubert 9, Minnie 12, Gene 18, Beth 15



Family Group



Gene 1928
School picture



Gene - 1917

Crashed Airplane - The cables jambed on the rear control forcing the plane down gradually causing the pilot to loose control. None of the 12 passengers were injured. Plane came to rest in a corn field a mile and a half east of Ashley. Farmers were permitted to draw out the gasoline and 3 did so only to report damage from use plane fuel to tractor engines. Plane was chopped into pieces and hauled away on trucks. Plane was carrying mail and passengers. (notice the new 1929 Chevy 6 tudor parked in the background)



You Were Born Before 1945 If...

IF YOU were born before 1945, just think about all the changes that you've seen during your lifetime.

You were born before television, before penicillin, before polio shots, frozen food, Xerox, contact lenses, frisbees, expressways, CD's and microwaves.

You were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ballpoint pens. You were before panty hose, dishwashers, clothes dryers, electric blankets, air-conditioning, drip-dry clothes and before man walked on the moon.

You got married first and then lived together. Closets were for clothes, not "coming out of". Bunnies were small rabbits, and rabbits were not Volkswagens. Pizza, McDonald's and instant coffee were still unheard-of.

Fast food was what you ate during Lent, and having a "meaningful relationship" meant getting along with your cousins.

You were before "house husbands", computer dating, dual careers and commuter marriages. You were before day-care centers, group therapy and retirement communities.

Before 1945... you never heard of FM radio, tape decks, electric typewriters, artificial hearts, word processors, yogurt, VCR's and guys wearing earrings.

"Time-sharing" meant togetherness and had nothing to do with computers or condominiums; a "chip" meant a piece of wood; hardware meant hardware and software wasn't even a word.

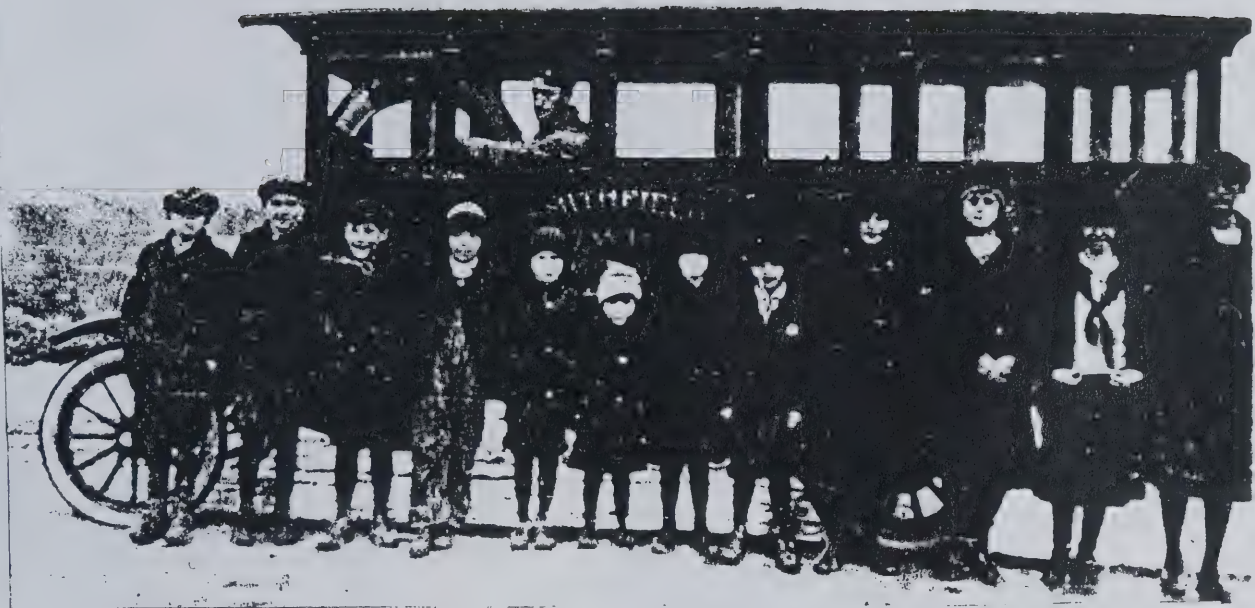
You hit the scene when five-and-ten stores sold things for 5¢ and 10¢. For a nickel you could buy five suckers, a pack of gum or an ice cream cone, ride a streetcar or buy enough stamps to mail one letter and two postcards.

You could buy a new Chevy coupe for \$600, but who could afford one? A pity, too, because gas back then was only 11¢ a gallon.

In your day, cigarette smoking was fashionable. Grass was something that was mowed. Coke was a cold drink, pot was what you cooked in and rock music was a grandma's lullaby.

No wonder there is such a generation gap today. But, overall, those years before '45 were pretty good.

hey? —Shared by J. Supple, Ames, Ia.



First school bus for us. 2nd grade 1923. Marion Clark was the driver.
L to R: Clark and Don Forrest, Roy King, Wayne Miller, Glenn and Irene Forrest, Gene Reinoehl,
?, Mildred King, Myrtle King Casselman, Vi Forrest Reiter, Thelma Wise Shannon.



Church at the crossroads



Millie was the youngest mother
at church on Mother's Day in 1940



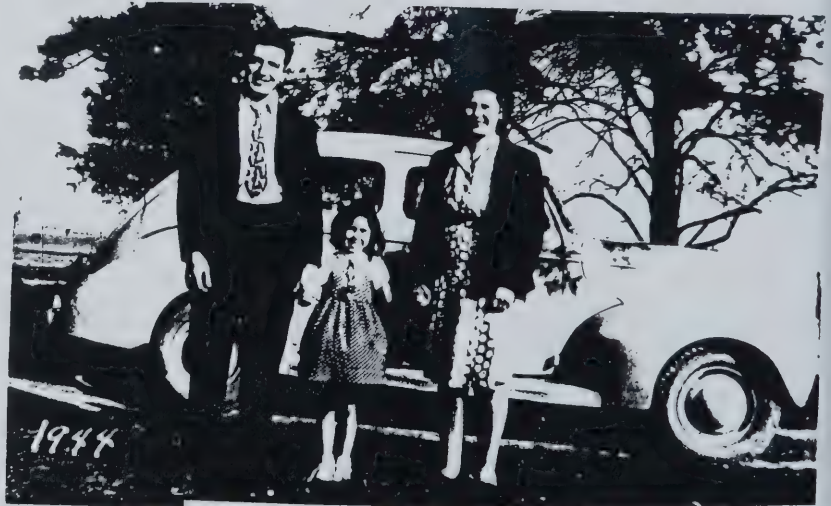
Gene 1938
Came to 'Court'!



Gene & Millie 1938
"Courting was fun!"



Gene - 1949 or 1950
at G.C. Lepley Garage



1948 Gene Barbara & Millie
Ready to go to church in
their 1940 Ford

Gene and Millie during walk
thru woods. Took our own
picture using a stick 1938



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